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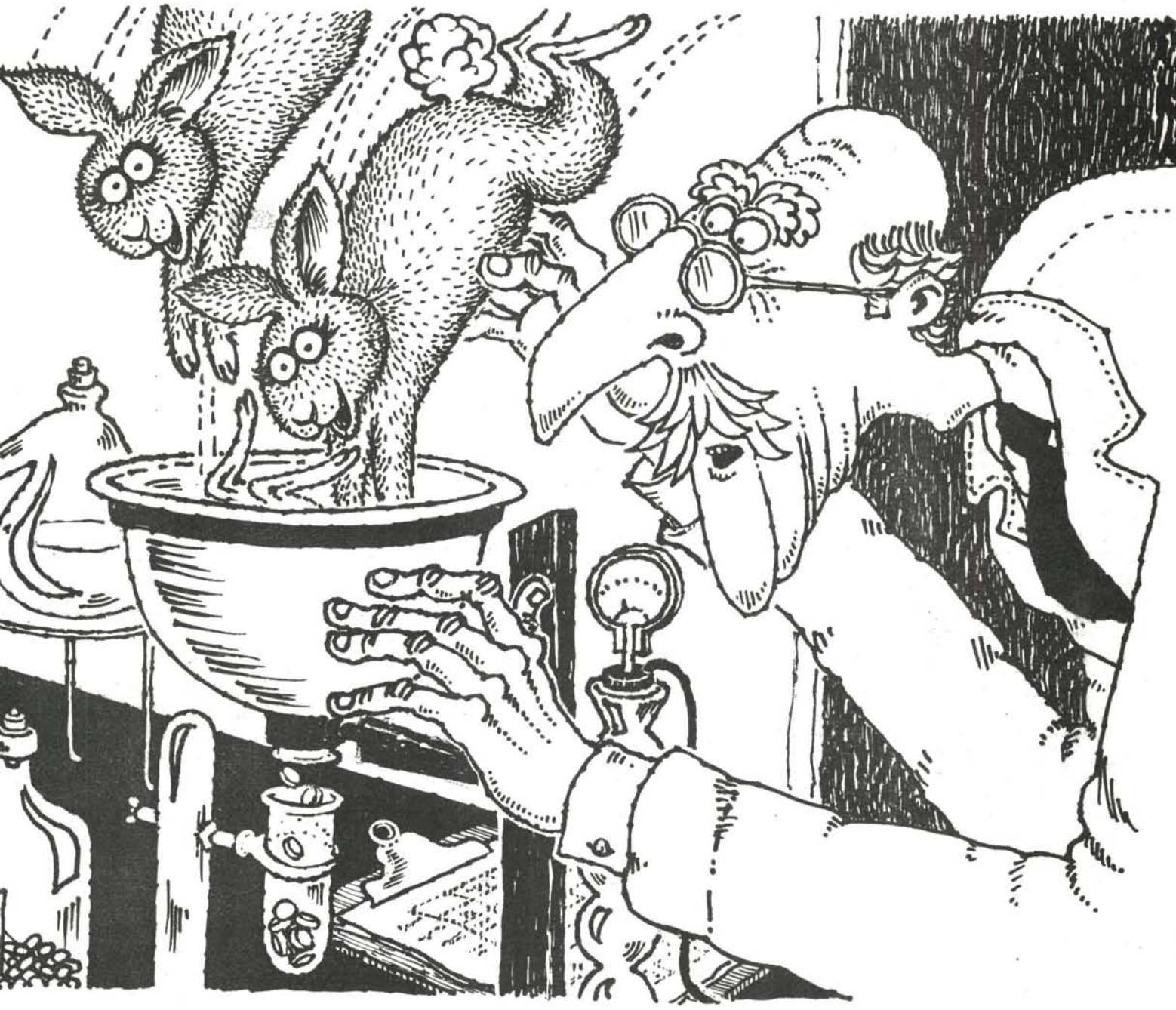

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New Statesman

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New Statesman

Vol 109 No 2825 10 May 1985

Squandering British Gas

PETER WALKER, Secretary of State for Energy and supposedly the last surviving delegate for the 'wets' in the Cabinet, is an intelligent man. He must have been privately embarrassed by the ideological drivel that he was required to spout in the House of Commons on Tuesday, when he announced that the government intends to float off the British Gas Corporation as a private company.

There is one understandable, if reprehensible, *political* reason for flogging off British Gas. As North Sea oil revenues falter and the wimp of an economic recovery that we are now experiencing fades, the government is going to be short of money for further income for tax cuts for its supporters before the next election. (Mrs Thatcher's government is, in fact, doing what would have been regarded as the epitome of unsound finance by those Victorian values which she otherwise embraces, namely using up accumulated capital in order to finance current deficit.) But that is not exactly a justification that a government minister can advance.

Instead, the decision to proceed with another massive public flotation was justified by the now familiar dogma about markets, competition and wider share ownership. Of all the long list of candidates for privatisation that this government has pushed through, British Gas fits least well into the anyway inherently improbable theory behind Thatcherite industrial policy.

Let us look at the 'arguments' with which Mr Walker sought to justify the British Gas announcement. The change, he said, would 'remove State intervention and substitute realistic tests of performance for bureaucratic and political ones'. Now, even the most gung ho advocate of private enterprise accepts that private monopolies providing an essential utility service require the closest State regulation in areas that go to the heart of the business — like availability, safety standards and pricing. At present these and related questions can be handled through the mechanisms of a nationalised industry.

In future they will have to be transmitted through a regulatory agency. The initial feeble arrangements for regulating British Telecom will clearly not stand any test of time and those for British Gas will have to be far more extensive. The pretence that there will be no more State, bureaucratic and political intervention in the provision of gas does not stand a moment's examination.

Nor does the idea of 'realistic tests' of performance. There can be few industries where market pressure to make short-term profit is likely to work more against any sensible definition of the national interest. There have been many stupid interventions by government over the past two decades in the way in which British Gas is run. The Heath government forced British Gas, together with other nationalised industries, to observe a 'voluntary' price restraint policy, which the private sector was ignoring and which put it heavily into the red. The Thatcher government forced British Gas to put up its prices unnecessarily, in effect as a means of collecting an indirect tax by another name. It also forced British Gas against its will to sell to the private sector its onshore oil field at Wytch Farm in Dorset, as well as its extensive offshore oil interests, again on purely ideological grounds.

It is the height of cynicism that the government that forced British Gas out of the oil business now says that, when it is safely

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delivered into private hands, it will be free once again to make sensible commercial decisions, and enter any business it likes. If the government of which Mr Walker was and is a member thought that there was too much political interference in the affairs of British Gas, the remedy was in its own hands.

In any case what more has the government expected by way of performance from British Gas that it has had? The Corporation made 'profits' last year of over £1 billion. All of that 'belonged' to the Exchequer. It can be predicted with certainty that a well run private enterprise (and by any standards British Gas has been well run) will manage to reduce its corporation tax bill way below what the taxpayer is currently getting from the industry.

Next Mr Walker argued that the change will create a 'real' ownership of British Gas by employees and the public 'in place of the nominal public ownership of the nationalised statute'. Now, Mr Walker as a younger man made his name and his money on the wilder shores of capitalism, when he joined Jim to found the bank that bore their names and subsequently went bust — Slater, Walker. He knows, therefore, from first-hand experience that 'shareholder democracy' has no meaning. The ownership of large public companies is dominated by institutional shareholders — pension funds, insurance companies and the like — and the idea that individual workers or outside shareholders have an effective proprietorial 'stake' in a company is just a sham. The democratic 'stake' we have in a nationalised industry may equally be symbolic — but it is symbolic of ownership by every British citizen, not a privileged minority.

Mr Walker also knows that the simple equation, public sector, bad — private sector, good, has no justification. The truth is that good and bad, efficient and inefficient are spread everywhere. British Gas, by most measures, is well above average for efficiency in British management. It certainly leaves standing such supposed bastions of free enterprise capitalism as Alfred Herbert, Dunlop and Westland — where incompetent managements over the years have resulted respectively in this country no longer having a viable machine tool, tyre and helicopter industry.

Finally, came the Walker argument that the change would allow 'the management and all who work in the industry [to] bring their present talents and link them with new freedom in the interest of the nation'. There can be few policy areas where the 'interests of the nation' more clearly require a co-ordinated national policy than in energy. This country is unusual in having massive supplies of coal, oil and gas — as well as nuclear power and alternative energy possibilities. It is, however, not only unusual but unique in not having any co-ordinated long-term energy policy. The interest of the nation desperately requires a policy aimed at turning our windfall advantages of geology into a national advantage. If Mr Walker indeed manages to put his proposal for a market free-for-all for gas into effect, he will have done wanton damage to the national interest. □

Kenneth Baker's weak excuse

THE HARDEST task for DoE minister Kenneth Baker in turning down the £119,000 grant that the GLC had intended to make to the London Lesbian & Gay Centre was finding a way to draft his 'no' in terms that wouldn't get him nailed outright for the sort of overt homophobia we've seen in Tory political broadcasts. The *intent* to say no throughout the waiting period (18 March-3 May) can't be doubted. Why else were all enquirers told that the minister required 'more information' — and then told (late-April) that he didn't? Words had to be found. Baker was appointed to be the 'human face' of the Tory campaign against Ken Livingstone, following the routing of his departmental chief Patrick Jenkin. Even on the 'marginal' issues, which is no doubt how he thinks of lesbian and gay concerns, he needs to minimise trouble.

For trouble even with some of its most stalwart back-benchers is what this government keeps getting, as it persistently forgets the mask and lets the demagogic queer-baiting visage show through. Tory back-bencher Jeremy Hanley, in a letter to a gay constituent, has just declared his dismay at finding out what he had aligned himself with when he agreed to take part in the most notoriously discriminatory of recent Tory broadcasts (page 5). John Wheeler, the senior Tory MP in London, has protested against the 'South African style' policing of our borders by Customs & Excise in pursuit of lesbian and gay reading matter (and meanwhile the 13,000 strong Customs & Excise group of the Society of Civil & Public Servants declares its shock at being confronted with the NCCL 'for the first time' on a charge of gross bias). Tory back-bencher Matthew Parris, secretary of the newly revived, if shaky, all-party Parliamentary civil liberties group, has made completely plain in the House that, though in other respects a Thatcherite young fogey, he perceives obvious offences against gays as offences against himself.

So what gloss did the clerks of the DoE come up with to save Kenneth Baker's human face in the matter of the intended first-year salaries of the London Lesbian & Gay Centre staff? 'There is no evidence that [the intended users] constitute an economically deprived group of the population'. And '[this question does] not appear to have been addressed in any depth by the Council' Indeed the 33-page document supporting the grant application, supplied to the DoE by the GLC doesn't contain a direct proof of this point about economic deprivation. Possibly because Mr Baker, who refused all invitations to visit the Centre, carefully didn't ask for it. Had he done so, he would have discovered that the centre has special facilities for the handicapped and will be used largely by younger people who cannot afford commercial entertainment. Could he now suggest how such a project can be otherwise financed? □

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TRIBUNAL UNCOVERS A 'RACIST' DHSS MANUAL

A CASE before an industrial tribunal has just brought to light a training booklet prepared by the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) in the late 1960s which described West Indians as frequently promiscuous because of a history of 'studbreeding' by slaveowners and 'unlimited begetting of children by slave women'. MARTIN BAILEY reports

IT'S CLAIMED that the significance isn't 'merely' historic. The booklet was produced in evidence by black social security officer Don Christopher at an industrial tribunal case currently adjourned to 2 July. He's alleging that he's been refused promotion because of his race — and pointing out that the fact that the booklet was in use for many years means that a substantial number of current social security officers have been trained on it.

It appears that as recently as 1983 copies of *Immigrants from the West Indies, India and Pakistan* were given to Bristol DHSS staff to help them 'deal with' the city's West Indian community. The 23 pages contain a lengthy section on 'the West Indian family' in which relationships are sub-divided into four 'types', from

Immigrants from the WEST INDIES, INDIA and PAKISTAN.

Christian Marriage 'the ideal for all' through Faithful Concubinage to Temporary Association to Disintegration.

'Grossly offensive'

Though the manual concludes that West Indian families are 'often subject to moral judgements which tend to be intolerant and unsympathetic', William Trant, director of the London-based West Indian Standing Conference, this week condemned the DHSS booklet as 'Grossly offensive', saying that some of the family relationships described don't exist as special types among West Indians in Britain.

Don Christopher himself, 44, is a Jamaican-born magistrate and social security officer who joined the DHSS as a 'snooper' in 1980 and became an adjudicating officer in Bristol the following year. A DHSS spokesperson admits that the training booklet now seems 'a bit racist' — but 'it's no longer in use. Now we have no training booklets specifically on immigarants, because they've become so well integrated'. ●

Just as CPAG exposes the 'passport to benefit' scam

THE DHSS is colluding with the Home Office in the creation of a system of internal controls on immigrants, according to a report published this week by Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) and the Runnymede Trust.

Passport to Benefits? has been written by two researchers at Runnymede Trust, the research agency in the field of race relations. They've collected evidence from advice agencies all over the country, and find that the practice of asking black people for passports, before accepting a claim for any sort of social security benefit is widespread.

It's applied even in cases where residential status isn't an issue, and applied only to black people, not to white Commonwealth citizens who are at least as likely to be in the UK under conditions which could affect their rights to benefit. Information is regularly passed between the DHSS and the Home Office about people's immigration status.

The DHSS's own 'S' manual (about procedures when people claim benefits) in fact tells staff 'Do *not* automatically ask to see the passport of a person who has come from abroad . . . Make every effort to deal with cases without asking to see passports.' In practice, however, anyone who is black, especially if she or he isn't completely fluent in English, is asked to produce a passport — in one case this happened to a man in Tameside who has lived in England since 1938.

There's strong evidence that in many areas, DHSS staff then routinely pass on information to the immigration authorities — in contradiction to their normal rule that social security records are confidential and not disclosed to third parties without the claimant's consent.

'Symptomatic'

Paul Gordon and Ann Newnham, the researchers, stress that 'passport checking, though degrading and racially discriminating, isn't itself the problem but a symptom of it. Passport checking is necessary so long as there is a connection between immigration status and entitlement to benefit.'

The evidence in this report should be coupled with that in last year's PSI report, suppressed by the DHSS (but reported in *New Statesman* 10 September 1984) which showed that racist attitudes were widespread among many benefit office staff. Gerald Kaufman, as shadow Home Secretary, has already given a pledge that 'in the first hour' after he assumes office, he would issue a directive to immigration staff that their behaviour must change. It's clear that Michael Meacher, as shadow Social Services Secretary, will have to be giving the same pledge as far as the treatment of black claimants by DHSS staff is concerned.

Sue Ward

'Passport to Benefit?': Paul Gordon & Anne Newnham, £2.95 (incl p&p) from CPAG (pubs), 1 Macklin St, London WC2B 5NH or Runnymede Trust, 37A Gray's Inn Rd, London WC1X.

Boost to women's role 'elitist', says NUPE man

OFFICIALS within NUPE (National Union of Public Employees) are delaying negotiations on a positive action package designed to open up officer jobs in the union to women.

NUPE's assistant divisional organiser in Scotland, Bob Thomson, is opposing the proposals as 'elitist' and the product of London trendies. His branch wants a halt to talks with management pending more discussion at branch level.

Two-thirds of NUPE's members are women. Yet out of a total of 180 organisers at area, divisional and national level all but 12 are men. A working party of NUPE's house union, the Society of Union Employees (SUE), which represents organisers, has accordingly drawn up an equal opportunities claim.

A draft has been circulating among branches since January and the final version was narrowly agreed by delegates at SUE annual conference last month — but only after all references to organisers' jobs being open to job-sharing had been deleted, and after a vocal minority had attempted to get the programme taken off the agenda for procedural reasons.

The agreement being sought is better than most union staffs have been able to negotiate. It sets a target of two women officers for each of the 11 divisions and two officials of ethnic backgrounds in some divisions.

It also asks for the removal of the requirement that all applicants should have a driving licence (far fewer women than men drive); and suggests that suitable candidates be placed on a panel and be provided with driving lessons by the union.

City Syndication Ltd

Who'll draw a line between élitism and sexism? — NUPE general secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe

For his part, Thomson, recently promoted as assistant divisional organiser in Scotland, complains that the programme has come from middle-class NUPE officials who want conditions that are far in excess of what working class women have. 'They want child-minding fees and job sharing. A whole range of things not open to NUPE's women members.'

In his own division two out of 17 organisers are women and he believes the union's strategy should be to open up the lay structures so that more women participate. 'We don't want women coming from universities. That's where most of them come from.'

Last September NUPE deputy general secretary Tom Sawyer, responsible for the implementation of APEX's equal opportunities policy, said "How unions respond to the needs of women will be crucial for their (the unions') future. In NUPE, the ideas about greater involvement have been developed as part of a special programme to give them their proper place in the union.'

Geraldine Hackett

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Now Customs officers call for sane 'obscenity' law

ONLY weeks before nine people associated with London's Gay's the Word bookshop face committal proceedings starting 24 June on 100 criminal charges of conspiracy to import 'indecent' literature (*NS* 25 January) discontent about the state of the law under which this is being done has surfaced among Customs officers themselves.

The Society of Civil & Public Servants (SCPS) holds its annual conference next week in Eastbourne, beginning Monday. This week (8-9 May) the union's Customs & Excise group, comprising some 13,000 members, holds its own prior conference in Nottingham. A motion backed by the executive, and therefore expected to pass, makes no mention of any current prosecutions, which are of course *sub judice* — but complains about the now-notorious Gay's the Word alone, but also from other would-be importers of lesbian/gay material, spokesperson Richard Lock, who is to propose the motion, says 'there's never before been a complaint to NCCL about our activities'.

Meanwhile the £50,000 fund-raising appeal by Gay's the Word formally launched at the start of this year has reached some £30,000. A benefit organised in Los Angeles on 21 April by A Different Light bookstore (most seized titles came from America) has just raised equal to £2,500. On 27-28 April a marathon sponsored reading in London of *Tales of the City* (by Armistead Maupin — originally published as a column in the *San Francisco Chronicle*) raised £2,800. Maupin came from America to be present, having had one of his own works seized, and subsequently released, by UK Customs.

Bob Workman

This Tuesday gays laid a VE Day 40th anniversary pink triangle wreath at the Cenotaph in Whitehall. Gay woman Sharley McLean (L) lost her mother at Riga concentration camp and among other members of her family her uncle Kurt at Oranienburg/Sachsenhausen. A presumed gay, his name was on the lists of the Hirschfield Institute. (R) Peter Tatchell.

discrepancies between the 1876 Customs Consolidation Act and the Obscene Publications Act 1959.

After a preamble emphasising that the 1876 Customs law prohibiting imports of alleged indecent or obscene material provides for no defence of literary, scientific, or other merit — in flat distinction to the 1959 law governing alleged obscene material published *within* the UK — the motion observes that this is 'liable' to place Customs officers in an 'invidious position'; a point already forcefully made by, among others, *Index on Censorship*, the *Bookseller*, the NCCL (which has already proposed new legislation), and in an attempted amendment to the Lords committee stage of the Administration of Justice Bill on 31 January.

Conference will be asked to 'instruct the EC' of the SCPS Customs & Excise Group 'to enter discussions with the Board of Customs & Excise to have the 1876 Act repealed, and to substitute the tests [of obscenity] provided for in the 1959 Act'. Plainly unhappy about the unstated background, which includes Customs seizures of 142 titles from

The resignation of the general secretary of NCCL, Larry Gostin, who made himself an outspoken advocate of lesbian and gay rights early in 1984, shortly after taking office, will make no difference to NCCL's work on the legal defence of the shop and of the two lesbians and seven gay men facing trial.

Andrew Lumsden

Fight for life

IT'S ESTIMATED that the £750,000 London Lesbian & Gay Centre, three years in the planning and opened only a month ago (NS 26 April), has just seven months' life left if earnings — currently 'over 50 per cent' of basic break-even — don't quickly rise. This follows last week's Department of the Environment decision to over-rule the GLC's intended section 137 grant of £119,000 to cover first-year staff costs. Day-to-day running is dependant on a large roster of volunteers and unwaged staff. ●

MISCELLANY

Flea in our ears

This being Scottish Conservative Party conference week, it's hardly surprising that Tories north of the border have been seeking the limelight. But one Iain Lawson, three-time loser in his attempts to get into Parliament and currently chair of the Scottish Conservative Candidates' Association, takes some beating. In the last few days he has launched a new internal Tory ginger group, published a report alleging that Labour councils misuse ratepayers' money to fund left-wing causes, and reiterated his belief that CND receives laundered cash from the East. But as if that were not enough, he has also just announced that his Paisley-based company, Pest Protection Services Ltd, has won a contract to eradicate vermin from the Falkland islands. According to Mr Lawson, for whom the war is evidently not over, South American fleas and flies were brought to the islands by Argentinians in their bedrolls. Rats and mice have spread, he claims, because of the damage done to sewage and drainage systems by heavy Argentinian trucks.

Woollen . . .

Here we go again. Our Politics of Envy Unit's investigations of company share option schemes have now turned up a scorcher. John Beckett, chair of Woolworth Holdings, had options worth £2,881,664 at last Friday's close. (The no 1 on the overall scoreboard compiled in NS *on 1 February 1985 was ICI's John Harvey-Jones with a mere half-mill.) Beckett was given options to buy 433,333 shares when he took command of Woolworth's as part of a 'rescue' organised by merchant bank Charterhouse Japhet in 1982. He's allowed to buy these shares at £1.50 each. The price was £8.15 last week and has been up to £8.65 this year (at which point Beckett whizzes past the £3 million mark).*

. . . combinations

Charterhouse itself has options at £1.50 on 2 million Woollies shares, now worth over £13 million, and Charterhouse director Victor Blank, responsible for organising the rescue, has his own 341,858 options, worth £2,273,356. A million options, totting over £7 million, are held by Baxtergate Investment Co, a subsidiary of Rosehaugh, a public company run by property developer Godfrey Bradman, who was also involved in the restructuring package. These last two lots of options were only disclosed in the accounts last week, having previously all been listed under Charterhouse. The options can be cashed in this October. Beckett's brother, Sir Terence, has made something of a career at the CBI out of calling for wage restraint. John Beckett no doubt feels that because his salary, £114,000, didn't go up last year, he's being a model of fraternal solidarity.

Hanley-pankey

The worms are going to turn on the present epoch of Tory party political broadcasts, you mark Miscellany's *words. Jeremy Hanley, Richmond (C), who fronted the knock-the-GLC ConProp broadcast of 21 March 1984 — yes, that long ago — has just written to one of his constituents, who happily turns out to be Nick Billingham, treasurer of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, to say he hadn't known in advance just what would come under attack in the broadcast, 'and was very disturbed when I saw what had been selected'.*

*Billingham was mainly angry at the ridiculing of the Gay Bereavement Project, subsequently approved for charitable status by those ultimate sobersides the Charity Commissioners. Hanley — smallest majority in the country, 74 — admits to having been particularly affronted by his Party's ridiculing of a race-relations project. Between the lies (*NS *19 April), the frauds (Kenneth Baker's fake factory last month) and the smears (*passim *above), Thatcher's going to find that no-one in the Commons will appear without script-approval.*

Damn jury system

Back in 1983, alarmed by the fact that opinion polls were suggesting that a majority of the public is opposed to the expansion of nuclear power, a CEGB employee named Frank Duckworth wrote a lengthy paper arguing that the polls shouldn't be used as evidence in campaigns to change government policy — precisely what some anti-nuclear groups were doing. The problem was, explained Duckworth, that opinion polls sample an 'uninformed' electorate. What's needed is a way of measuring opinion before and after a balanced debate, like, say, he said, *Radio Four's* 'You, the jury' — an argument he supported by a detailed analysis of the voting patterns of 35 previous programmes. This week the CEGB debated the need for nuclear energy with Friends of the Earth on 'You, the jury'. CEGB lost.

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May elections

SDP DOES NOTHING FOR THE LIBERAL ADVANCE

THE 2 MAY county council elections revealed a failure by the SDP to bring to the Alliance any distinctive constituency of its own capable of significantly transforming previously weak Liberal areas into strong Alliance ones. David Owen is going to face continued pressure for a merger. JOHN CURTICE, CLIVE PAYNE, and ROBERT WALLER analyse the Alliance's performance

THE ALLIANCE was able to turn last week's county council election results into a considerable publicity success. 658 of the seats up for grabs in England and Wales (19 per cent of the total) fell into its hands. The Alliance has constantly complained about the inequities of Britain's electoral system. But last week that proved much less obstructive to its political progress.

Why? First, there was one crucial difference between this election, the 1983 general election, and indeed any of the sets of local elections held since the formation of the Alliance: the Conservatives were doing badly. In local elections, as in parliamentary elections, the Alliance is an effective challenger for victory in many more Conservative areas than Labour ones. The decline in Conservative strength therefore made it much easier for the Alliance to pick up seats.

But the Alliance also helped itself. The reason why in general it finds it difficult to win seats is, of course, the relative geographic evenness of its vote.

New patterns

Last week that pattern started to change. In a sample of 39 constituency results collected by the *Sunday Times*, the Alliance rarely increased its vote above its 1983 general election level by more than 2 or 3 points. But in six of the constituencies it 'won' — nearly all places where the Alliance held a good second place in 1983 — the vote increased by an average of 12 per cent.

In addition, where the comparisons were made, Liberal, though not SDP, candidates were generally more successful in improving on last year's local election performance in Tory wards (made more capturable by the decline in the Conservative vote) than in Labour ones. The Association of Liberal Councillors' policy of 'targetting' particular promising areas for intensive campaigning may well have paid dividends.

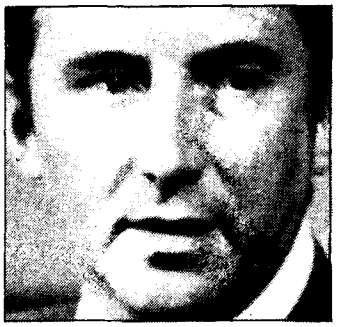
The geographical concentration of the Alliance's electoral progress emerges clearly if one compares the geographical distribution of Alliance county councillors in 1985 with that of Liberal councillors after the 1973 county elections. Overall, the Alliance won three times as many seats last week as the Liberals managed in 1973. But (*see Table*) in a large part of the North of England and the North Midlands the Alliance's share of the council chamber in 1985 is little different from that in 1973. Only Northumberland, which contains Alan Beith's Berwick-upon-Tweed constituency, departs significantly from this pattern.

In contrast, in the South West the Alliance made sufficient progress to break through the constraints of the electoral system. Only in Avon did the Alliance fail to win at least a third of all of the seats won by the major parties and it emerged as the largest party in Cornwall, Somerset and Gloucestershire. In 1973, by contrast, the Liberals won only 9 per cent of the major party seats in the region.

Where the Alliance has gained most — and least

Most Progress	%	Least Progress	%
Cornwall*	+58.8	Derbyshire	-0.3
Somerset	+41.1	Suffolk	+0.1
Isle of Wight	+35.0	Durham	+0.5
Gloucestershire	+32.5	Lancashire	+0.6
Devon	+30.5	Humberside	+2.0
Northumberland	+27.2	Nottinghamshire	+2.3
Wiltshire	+25.7	Surrey	+3.5
Cambridgeshire	+25.1	Staffordshire	+3.6
		Cumbria	+4.9

The table shows the increase in the Alliance share of the seats won by the major parties compared with the equivalent Liberal percentage in 1973. For example, in Somerset the Liberals won 2 out of 44 seats won by the major parties in 1973 — or 4.5%; the Alliance won 26 out of 57 seats last week — or 45.6%; hence the increase of 41.4%.
**Over 90 per cent of seats won by Independents in 1973.*



Coping on his tod — David S

Tactical votes

The Alliance failed, however, to benefit from extensive tactical voting. The Labour vote was not particularly squeezed in wards where it was third in 1984 (nor was the Alliance vote where it had been third).

Where Alliance candidates did unusually well it tended to be at the expense of both Conservative and Labour. Although these elections may have confirmed the existence of a three-party system in Britain, they did not suggest any increasing realisation on the part of the electorate of the tactical opportunities this presents.

The SDP's share of the Alliance's haul was just 120 seats — less than one-fifth of the total. It was David Steel rather than David Owen who could claim the golden fleece. The SDP's weakness does not reflect any voter discrimination in favour of the Liberals. Indeed in our sample the SDP increased the previous Alliance vote by 1 or 2 per cent more than the Liberals. ●

Rates — laundering on

NOW THAT Sheffield has set a rate (7 May) within the government limits, the ratecapping campaign is all over bar a lot of shouting at council meetings in the six remaining authorities.

Apart from Hackney and non-ratecapped Liverpool ratecapped councils are likely in the next two weeks to come up with budgets that protect jobs and services yet fall within the government's rate limits. Several will leave gaps for 'unspecified savings' — the deficit budget strategy — but others, like Islington and Southwark, are likely to squeeze through with the help of creative accounting.

Thanks to a combination of underspending and preparation over the years for ratecapping, some authorities find themselves with money in the coffers. Southwark, which almost made a rate in April, found itself with a windfall of £10m from underspending, allowing it a growth budget with no cuts in jobs and services.

Ah! Creativity!

But there's most hope placed in creative accounting. Haringey, for example, has filled a seemingly unbridgeable £15m gap with extra money from the GLC (£4.8m), rescheduling loan payments (£1.2m) and by using receipts from council house sales to pay for housing repairs (£8.4m).

The latter is a particularly clever wheeze, but it will cost dearly next year. Councils may spend only 20 per cent of their capital receipts on new housing, but Haringey has discovered that there's nothing to stop them spending the money on repairs. Using capital to fund expenditure is mortgaging the future and next year's account opens with an £8.4m gap.

Many other councils will now be tempted to opt for deficit budgeting — i.e. their expected income will be less than their expected spending. Some are clearly hoping that their traditional inability to spend all their money will see them through. Others have enough money to muddle through without having to underspend.

The leader of Leicester council — one which has set a rate — told the *New Statesman* that, faced with a 33 per cent rate reduction, it isn't going to cut jobs or services and 'faces a crisis later in the financial year'. No budget has yet been drawn up.

Lewisham (ratecapped) is in the same situation. Discussions within the Labour group, absent when the rate was passed, have brought the gap down from £17m to £5m by such tricks as selling off some of the council's mortgages to raise £3.3m — 'which is like exchanging the mortgage on your home with cash from a loan shark' as one councillor put it.

Sheffield is still trying to sort out the mess. It wanted to spend £249.6m, but thanks to a combination of right wing Labour and Tory and Liberal councillors is now saddled with a budget of £218.5m. Its officers have now been instructed to work out a new budget to bridge that £31.1m gap. There's £17m in special funds and reserves to cover over half of it, but there's still a possibility that an attempt will be made to increase the budget at the next council meeting. As with the other councils, Sheffield can muddle through this year but faces problems in 1986.

Whether councils choose creative accounting or deficit budgeting, the crunch will come next year, when full elections are due in the London boroughs and partial or full elections elsewhere. Labour will enter the elections with the advantage of defending the poor 1982 'Falklands Factor' results, but will have to justify this year's strategies of buying time or mortgaging future income.

The buck will have to stop somewhere. But because of the wolf-crying this year, who is going to believe that it will be in 1986?

Christian Wolmar

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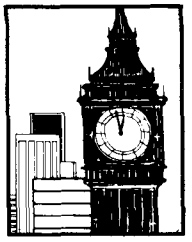

PETER KELLNER

Labour does best where it most needs the votes

MORE CONFUSION than normal followed last week's shire county elections. Was it a standard or an exceptional mid-term reverse for the Tories? Did Labour do well enough or not to win an outright parliamentary majority if these results are projected nationally? How well did the Liberal/SDP Alliance really perform?

One of the problems derives from the failure of any of the television channels to mount a results service last week. With Scotland, London and other major English cities not voting, they were not interested. One of the useful by-products of on-the-night results programmes is that they commission analysis that others can examine in greater detail afterwards. This time, when the results were more interesting than in most other spring elections, it has taken longer for analysis to catch up with reality.

Still, better late than never. Here I draw on statistics collected by Channel Four's *A Week in Politics*, Ivor Crewe and BBC2's *Newsnight* (reported in Monday's *Guardian*), and by John Curtice, Clive Payne and Robert Waller for the *Sunday Times* (see opposite). Taking all the material together, these are my conclusions.

The Conservatives did exceptionally badly. Their share of the vote has fallen by about 11 percentage points since the general election — implying a level of national support of 32-33 per cent. Historic comparisons are not easy, not least because until a decade or so ago shire counties had many more independent councillors, many of them Tories in disguise. But last week's Tory performance was certainly the worst since Mrs Thatcher became Prime Minister, and probably the worst since the second world war. To say, as leading Conservatives did last weekend, that last week's results reflected nothing more than standard mid-term protest is nonsense.

In particular, the Tories did worse than in the last shire county elections in 1981. That was by some margin the trickiest year in Mrs Thatcher's first term: if anything, the Conservatives ought to have gained rather than lost seats last week. As it was, they lost more than 170 of the 1,500 seats they won in 1981 (after allowing for boundary changes). What is even more worrying for the Tories is the fact that their net losses occurred in the south of England. If we draw a jagged line from the Wash to the Severn, the Tories held their position to the north and west of that line (519 seats in 1981, 511 last week), but lost one in six of their seats south and east of that line (967 in 1981, 803 last week). Their losses in the south were greater than may be attributed simply to a nationwide swing: it looks as if, in a number of places where the Tories might have just held on, they suffered an unusually large swing and lost. If this were repeated in a general election, Mrs Thatcher's chances of a third term as Prime Minister would be sharply reduced.

Labour did well in the places it needs to win if Neil Kinnock is to become Prime Minister. For those people who follow the minutiae of election analysis, two different conclusions were drawn last weekend. Those who looked at county-wide statistics concluded that Labour had not achieved a sufficient swing since 1983 to win an outright victory if the same votes had been cast in a general election. On the other hand, those who looked at marginal parliamentary constituencies found a larger swing to Labour — big enough to take Labour past the 326-seat winning post.

The solution to this arcane but potentially important mystery is that Labour did exceptionally well (compared with 1983) in towns in the south and home counties. Partly this represents a rebound effect: they are places where Labour was hammered two years ago. But, in addition, there seems to be a slight difference between urban and rural areas, with Labour doing better in the towns, and the Alliance in the country.

Crewe found that in southern counties generally, the Conservatives' share has fallen by 12 points since 1983, with Labour gaining 9 points and the Alliance gaining three. But in 16 of the urban parliamentary seats in the south where Labour must do well to win power at Westminster, Labour's share rose by 14 points, with the Alliance slipping back by two. Aggregating the results from ward level, Labour 'won' seats such as Medway (Conservative majority in 1983: 8,656), Dover (9,220) and *both* Brighton seats (Kemptown: 9,378; Pavilion: 11,132).

There are, however, problems with these extrapolations. Labour's performance in the Midlands and the North was much patchier; and in any case, the big conurbations which contain more than 50 of Labour's target seats did not vote last week. Local polls (see last week's *NS*) suggest that Labour would have done well in London and Scotland; but the indications from last week's voting of how well Labour would have done in marginals in the northern half of England is more mixed.

Still, we must be grateful for medium-sized mercies. In 1983 Labour won only three seats outside London in the south of England. Last week's votes would have increased that number to about 30. Once more Labour can lay some claim to being a national and not just a regional party.

The Liberal/SDP Alliance did not achieve a breakthrough. They would have gained parliamentary seats last week (between 16 and 40, depending on how you do the sums) — not because they gained votes nationally compared with 1983, but because the Tory vote fell and because the Liberals did exceptionally well in some target areas.

A frequent refrain of local election analyses has been the dominance of the Liberals over the SDP. Last week there were four successful Liberal candidates for each SDP victor. At a Parliamentary level, the pattern is likely to be similar: unless the Alliance wins well over 100 seats, the Liberals will dominate the partnership.

Examination of how people voted last week in 14 Alliance target seats demonstrates the point. The Liberals 'won' four of their seven targets (Pendle, Cardiff Central, Wiltshire North, Southend West), with an average increase of 8 points in their share of the vote since 1983. The SDP 'won' only one of its target seats (Oxford West and Abingdon); over the seven seats its average vote fell by one point.

Most significantly, Labour regained Herts West, Stevenage and Cambridge: all seats where it came third behind the SDP at the general election. This is especially serious for the SDP, as well as good for Labour. The point is that most of the SDP's (as opposed to the Liberals') target seats are ones where either a sitting MP was narrowly defeated two years ago, or where the SDP just edged Labour from second to third place.

Unless the Alliance wins a significantly higher national share of the vote, it can expect to win few if any of these seats next time. If the Alliance wins 50 seats in the next Parliament, at least 40 — and possibly as many as 45 — will be Liberal.

That calculation ought to dampen David Owen's enthusiasm for talk about the Alliance's terms for helping to sustain a coalition government if there is a hung Parliament. As in most county councils now, it will be the Liberals, not the Alliance, that hold the balance. Doubtless the first instinct of David Steel — like the first instinct of many Liberal county councillors — will be to bargain on the basis of an agreed Alliance strategy.

But what about the second and third instincts as the pressures of holding the balance crowd in? What if the Labour group in Hungshire want to declare the county a nuclear-free zone? What if Kinnock were to present Steel with a progressive, expansionary package on a take-it-or-leave-it basis and refuse to negotiate line-by-line as Owen wants? The strains on the Alliance could be considerable. Dr Owen may yet curse the day when the voters elected so many hung councils. □

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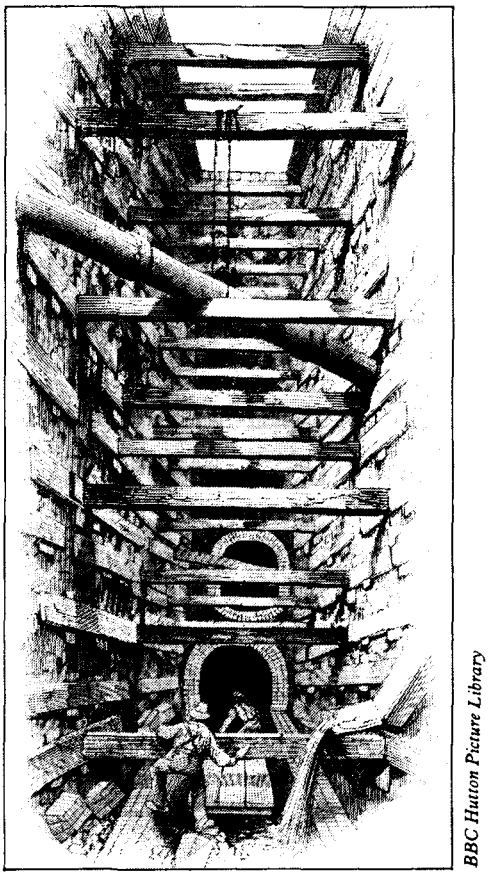
PROLONGING ACTIVE LIFE

On the one hand there is Enoch Powell and assorted allies trying to get experiments using human embryos to be banned by law. On the other there is a growing lobby to restrict, if not ban, the extensive use of animals for testing drugs, cosmetics and other chemicals. Few doubt that the experiments cause the animals to suffer. But, argues Robert Sharpe, history shows that new drugs requiring animal testing have only had a marginal effect on improving our health



BBC Hutton Picture Library

Fleet Street's sewer — no, not the press, but a vital public health measure

THE USE OF animals in scientific, industrial and medical research has always been a hotly contested issue. But with new legislation to replace the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876 near at hand, the powerful vested interest groups whose profits and livelihood depend on laboratory animals are stepping up their campaigns to ensure the survival of vivisection. Are the benefits really so great or are they exaggerated for propaganda purposes?

History shows that the real reasons for the dramatic increase in life expectancy since the middle of the last century are improvements in nutrition, living and working conditions, hygiene and sanitation, with medical measures only having a relatively marginal effect. The reduction in Britain's death rate from the 1850s was almost exclusively due to the decline of the infections — mainly TB, bronchitis, pneumonia, influenza, whooping cough, measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria, smallpox and the water- and food-borne diseases such as cholera, typhoid, diarrhoea and dysentery. Mortality for nearly all the infectious diseases was declining before, and in most cases long before, specific therapies became available.

One example is the rapid decline in deaths from the commonest infections of childhood — scarlet fever, whooping cough, diphtheria and measles. Around 90 per cent of the reduction in mortality was achieved *before* the introduction of antibiotics and widespread immunisation against diphtheria.

Another example is the decline of tuberculosis. Drug treatment, introduced in 1947, is considered to have speeded up the already declining death rate in England and Wales, but not in the US. While it is difficult to assess the contribution of BCG vaccination after introduction in Britain, some doubt surrounds its value in third world countries. The Netherlands had the lowest death rate from respiratory TB for any European country in 1957-59 and 1967-69 despite having no national BCG programme.

American researchers J. & S. McKinlay of Boston University have concluded that

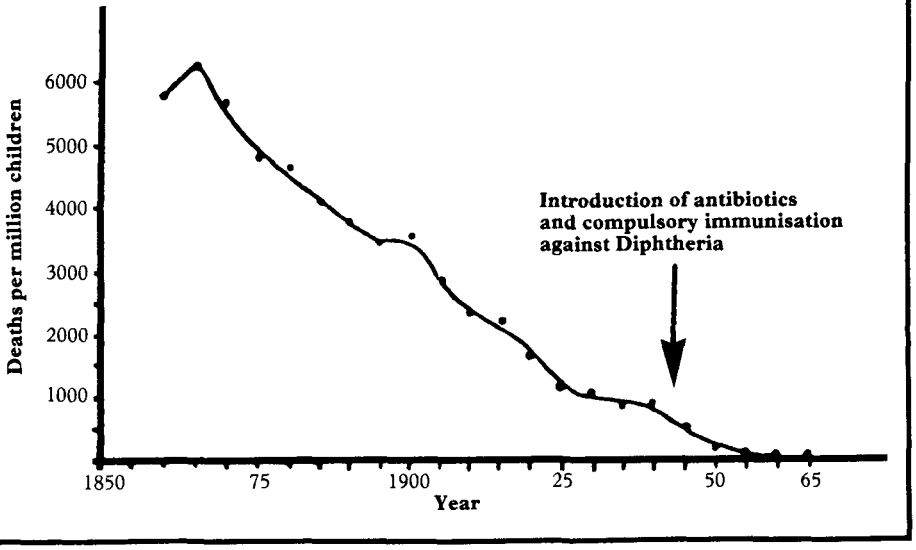
> In general, medical measures (both chemotherapeutic and prophylactic) appear to have contributed little to the overall decline in mortality in the United States since about 1900 — having in many instances been introduced several decades after a marked decline had already set in and having no detectable influence in most instances. More specifically, with reference to those five conditions (influenza, pneumonia, diphtheria, whooping cough, and poliomyelitis) for which the decline in mortality appears substantial after the point of intervention — and on the unlikely assumption that all of this decline is attributable to the intervention — it is estimated that at most 3.5 per cent of the total decline in mortality since 1900 could be ascribed to medical measures introduced for the diseases described here.

THE DECLINE of cholera is a good example of how practical advances are not necessarily dependent on scientific understanding. By careful observation John Snow deduced that contaminated water was the origin of the spread of cholera in a London outbreak. In 1854 he removed the handle of the Broad Street pump to prove his point and the outbreak stopped. Yet this was nearly 30 years before the discovery of the cholera bacterium.

Consequently, society's 'control' of the infectious diseases rests primarily on efficient public health services and a reasonable standard of living. Since medical measures clearly played only a relatively minor role in increasing life expectancy, it follows that animal experiments must also have played a very small part, even on the unlikely assumption that animals were involved in developing all such medical measures.

The principal causes of death in Western

Deaths of children under 15 years attributed to scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough and measles



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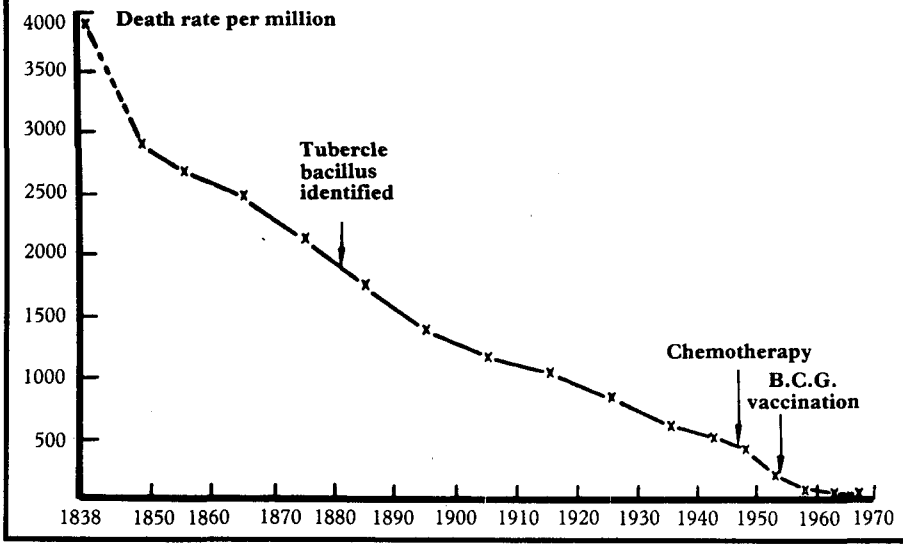
Respiratory tuberculosis — mean annual death rate: England and Wales



society include heart disease, cancer, strokes, respiratory diseases, alcohol-related problems, diabetes and high blood pressure, most of which are very difficult or impossible to cure but are largely preventable. Much of this burden of disease is attributable to faulty diet and because we smoke, eat and drink to excess, fail to exercise sufficiently and live and work in environments polluted by dangerous substances.

But there are striking differences between social groups which indicate that the direct and indirect effects of poverty, such as bad housing, are still major factors in disease. Working-class people suffer much higher levels of chronic sickness and death rates than do employers and managers.

If the health of the nation were a government priority we could expect a vigorous campaign to prevent disease. Yet bodies which are crucial in improving public health, such as the Health and Safety Executive, environmental health officers, the Health Education Council and other public health organisations, all enjoy a low profile and — given the importance of their work — low public funding compared with the sensational glamour of heart or kidney transplants which at best can only prolong the life of a few. The reality of government health policy is that less than half a per cent of the nation's health budget goes on prevention.

It follows that at best animal experimentation could have only a marginal impact on health, even assuming it to be a reliable or indeed the only method of research. Yet the most strongly criticised test, like the LD50 poisoning test, has been staunchly defended by government on the grounds that it is essential in assessing the safety of new drugs.

Why is this the case? On the one hand, any action towards a healthier lifestyle would inevitably conflict with powerful vested interest groups, such as the tobacco and alcohol industries, the meat and dairy industry, the processed food industry, and the drug industry, whose aggressive advertising and promotional activities encourage the 'pill for every ill' mentality and the belief that health can be obtained from a bottle. Unfortunately the medical profession has done less than it could to discourage this attitude.

For instance, the National Advisory Committee on Nutrition Education (NACNE) recently announced its recommendations for a healthier diet. The report shows that the typical British diet is a main cause of the diseases that most people in the West suffer and die from, including, according to NACNE, heart disease, cancer of the large bowel and colon, obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, constipation,

HERE'S SOMETHING TO KEEP YOUR BRAIN ON ITS TOES.

Next Wednesday sees the start of a new series of 'Voices' in which leading intellectuals and writers look at the ironies and contradictions of the post-war world.

In the first programme, Stuart Hall and Umberto Eco discuss the sense of economic, ideological, and cultural crisis which is so widespread in our society today.

Guests in later programmes include Günter Grass, Heinrich Böll, Noam Chomsky, Kurt Vonnegut, Salman Rushdie, Susan Sontag, and Nadine Gordiner.

VOICES 11.00 WEDNESDAYS

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diverticular disease, gall bladder disease, irritable bowels and strokes. The report specifically recommends far less fat, sugar and salt in the diet as crucial steps towards preventing these diseases. But such recommendations, if implemented, would have adverse economic effects on the dairy and food processing industries. There have been suggestions that publication of the NACNE report was delayed by the DHSS and then published with more modest recommendations.

Government itself is a vested interest, receiving billions of pounds in revenue from tobacco and alcohol sales, not to mention the large contribution made by the tobacco, alcohol and drug industries to the balance of trade. And adult deaths save billions in unpaid pensions.

On the other hand, there are many influential groups whose profits depend on animal experiments and in Great Britain most animals are used to develop new drugs and appliances (2,039,923 experiments in 1983). As the recent debate on limited drug lists illustrated, the vast majority of new medicines introduced into the UK are new formulations, combinations or duplications of *existing* drugs. Yet even the remaining new chemical entities, according to the DHSS's Medicines Division, 'have largely been introduced into therapeutic areas already heavily oversubscribed (and) for conditions which are common, largely chronic and occur principally in the affluent Western society. Innovation is therefore largely directed towards commercial returns rather than therapeutic need'.

Of 107 such new chemical entities, introduced between 1971 and 1976, only about 8 per cent were classified by the Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin, and Medical Letter, as 'important' medical additions, while nearly 70 per cent were judged to offer either 'no advantage' or a 'marginal advantage' over existing products. Millions of animals therefore suffer and die to develop and test drugs for which there is little or no therapeutic need. According to Dr R. D. Mann, Principal Medical Officer at the DHSS, discouraging the development of such 'me-too' drugs 'would save many animal lives'.

In recent years, with animal experiments carried out on a huge scale, has our overall health improved? In 1951 a 45-year-old man could expect to live an extra 26.4 years while in 1981 he could expect a further 27.5 more years. Yet according to the General Household Survey, there has been a progressive *increase* in the number of people reporting chronic sickness (defined as any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity) between 1972 and 1982. In 1982 an astonishing 41 per cent of British men and 42 per cent of women aged between 45 and 64 reported being chronically sick. In 1961 233.2 million prescriptions were dispensed in the UK and this had risen dramatically to 389.2 million in 1983. It doesn't look as if we are getting healthier.

Of course there is a place for research, but conducted humanely, without using animals. Nevertheless, whatever methods are chosen, much more could be achieved by effective disease prevention campaigns. □

Dr Robert Sharpe is the Scientific Officer of the Lord Dowding Fund for Humane Research.

COSMETICS

BEAUTY AND THE BEASTS

ON YOUR BATHROOM shelf you may well have an array of bottles and jars which exude images of glamour, beauty and sweet smells. Most are there courtesy of a dark trail of pain and even death — the tests and experiments on animals carried out by cosmetic firms.

The issue is becoming increasingly controversial. The White Paper published by the government in 1983, 'Scientific Procedures on Living Animals', acknowledged that: 'The testing of cosmetics upon animals is perhaps the most strongly criticised aspect of the present system.' It is the grotesqueness of the contrast between image and reality which in part explains the mounting public reaction against animal cruelty. As a result, a number of cosmetic firms have decided to adopt cruelty-free policies.

One test which has incited public revulsion is the Draize Patch Test in which patches of skin are progressively stripped from the animal's body. The animal is usually conscious and has been given no anaesthetic. Products like after-shave and hairspray are then applied to the raw tissue and left for several days to test how irritating they are. The results can resemble severe chemical burns.

Perhaps the best known test, which has incited flurries of public leafleting and campaigning, is the Draize Eye Test. In this, concentrated preparations are sprayed or introduced into the eyes of rabbits which, lacking tear ducts, and with their eye lids fastened open, cannot wash away the irritant. Again, it is not normal to give an anaesthetic. The damage ranges from severe swelling and bleeding to blindness.

This test is anyway a crude measure of how humans would react for the rabbit's eye differs in many ways from ours. The results also differ from test to test, failing one of the basic scientific criteria that a test must be repeatable. There are alternatives, such as cell cultures, computer programmes and using excised animal membrane. For instance, Professor Joseph Leighton, an American scientist, sees a replacement in the choriollantoic membrane (CAM) of the hen's egg. He has reported that the CAM test can 'identify accurately all those preparations that produce a severe response thereby eliminating the need to test these in the rabbit's eye.'

At Salford University, Dr Alan Dyer and co-worker Ian Dick are conducting further research into the eradication of painful skin-testing. Their work is financed by the Humane Research Trust based in Cheshire. Dr Dyer believes that the pig ear membrane 'is a suitable model to mimic the barrier experienced in human skin'. As the membrane is removed from the animal before the test, no animals need to be made sick or killed.

Then there is the controversial LD50 (lethal dose 50 per cent) test. Animals are force-fed cosmetic substances — lipsticks, powders, lotion etc — until half of them die. It is, as top government scientists admit, a crude measure of toxicity. The animals which survive do, of course, suffer all the ill effects of poisoning.

Anti-Vivisection Campaign

Waiting for their eye tests

MANY SCIENTISTS thus deplore not only the ethics behind this sort of work but also the inconclusive results it produces. The tests are criticised for being needlessly performed over and over again without anyway being able to exactly replicate the same conditions. Species, weight, sex, genetic differences, health, diets, laboratory conditions and seasonal variations can all affect the final results, undermining their reliability.

One company which has pioneered more reliable forms of testing is the New York based Health Designs Inc. They have designed computer programmes using data produced by earlier animal experiments, which can be used to predict how animals would react to various chemicals. So far they have achieved an 80 per cent accuracy rate in predicting a test result. When they scrutinised the 20 per cent 'failures' they found that many of the original test results had been reported incorrectly in the scientific literature.

With a growing number of alternatives available — all lawful in this country which does not require animal testing for cosmetics — and a growing pressure, especially from women and young people, many cosmetics firms are switching their policy. A spokesperson from Yardley's said: 'We do not use animals in the development process of our new products, nor do we test the ingredients used in them in this way. Where tests are necessary we test on human volunteers.' The Marketing Director for Lentheric Morny, Findlay McClymont, said: 'It is our company policy not to use animals in the testing of our products. We currently test all our fragrances, toiletry and skincare items on willing human volunteers.' Other companies giving cruelty-free guarantees include Weleda, Rimmel, Henara, Innoxa, Boots own brand, The Body Shop and Beauty without Cruelty. (A complete list can be obtained from the RSPCA.)

This is one area of industrial production in which the individual moral choices we make can have a direct effect in ending what is, for many of us, a barbarous practice.

Carol Wills

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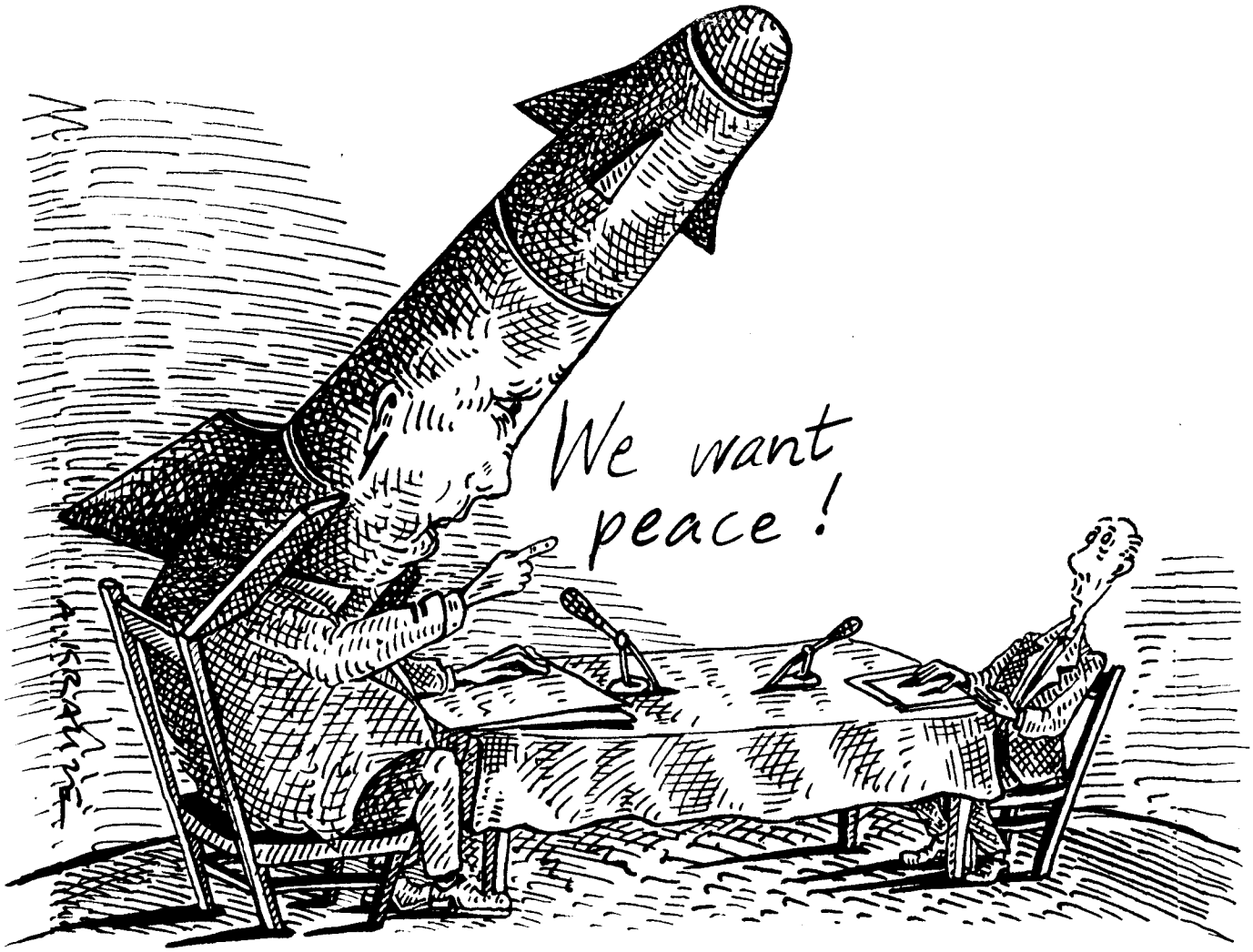

Andrzej Krauze

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

FRAGILE BARRIER TO MAYHEM

The final preparatory meeting for the review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty later this year finished last week. According to the government, all is going splendidly. Rob Edwards disagrees

ON 2 SEPTEMBER delegates from most of the 124 countries that are party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) will gather in Geneva — for the third five-yearly NPT review conference. The treaty — the main international attempt to prevent the spread and stockpiling of nuclear weapons — is more at risk than ever before. The increasingly bitter conflicts between the nations which have nuclear weapons and those without now seriously threaten one of the few barriers against a nuclear free-for-all.

The NPT, which was signed in 1968 and came into force in 1970, followed US President Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' programme, launched in 1953, and the system of control theoretically administered by the United Nations-inspired International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from 1957 onwards. It rests on the same false assumption: that it is possible to preserve a complete and verifiable distinction between civil and military nuclear technologies.

In essence the NPT was a bargain between the Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) — Britain, the US and the Soviet Union — and the Non-Nuclear Weapons States (NNWS) party to the treaty. By promising not to develop nuclear weapons, the NNWS gained the 'inalienable right' to develop 'civil' nuclear power and to expect assistance from the NWS to do so. To comply, they have to submit their civil facilities to 'full-scope' IAEA safeguards, designed to deter the military use of civil materials and technologies.

In return, the Non-nuclears expected the NWS to disarm. Crucially, Article VI of the treaty pledges all parties to:

> pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date, and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective control.

The failure of the NWS to keep this promise is the single most damaging threat to the integrity of the NPT. This was by far the most controversial issue at each of the previous two NPT review conferences, in 1975 and 1980, and prevented agreement being reached on any other proliferation issues.

Since 1970 the total number of strategic nuclear weapons in the world is estimated to have more than trebled — from about 6,000 to 20,000. This year the NNWS will attack the NWS for failing to conclude the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (the US and UK are blocking the resumption of negotiations) and the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II: Reagan has refused to ask the US Congress to ratify). It is unlikely that they will draw much comfort from the recently restarted talks between the US and the Soviet Union in Geneva. However hard representatives of the NWS may try to wriggle out of it (British Foreign Office officials have been heard to argue that Article VI merely requires negotiations to be taking place rather than results to be achieved) their lack of progress over the years is indefensible.

THERE ARE a number of other major problems with the NPT. For a start most of the nations who are suspected of having developed, or of being about to develop nuclear weapons, have refused to become parties — including South Africa, Israel, India, Pakistan, Argentina and Brazil. They argue, in the recent words of a Brazilian spokesperson, that all the treaty offers is 'discrimination for most and privilege for a few'. Two known nuclear weapons states, China and France, have also refused to sign the treaty: the former initially called it a 'hoax', though the latter has promised to act as if it had signed.

Rather than giving preferential assistance in nuclear power development to NNWS party to the treaty, nuclear exporters have actually given a better deal to countries that have refused to ratify the treaty, sometimes selling sensitive technologies to countries thought to have an

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SPONGING OFF THE PUBLIC

Consultants claim that their private practice saves valuable National Health Service resources. But the systematic undercharging of private patients using NHS facilities is now so great that the Comptroller and Auditor General, Sir Gordon Downey, has refused to approve the 1983/84 NHS accounts. These extracts from audit reports explain why, in graphic detail

SIR GORDON found 'serious and persistent failures to follow departmental guidance and to maintain proper control over income from private patients and other non-NHS work, leading to losses of income'. The British Medical Association says it's not the doctors' fault that up to £60 million of uncollected private patients' fees is lost, and blames the health service administrators.

The following extracts are taken from audit reports presented to health authorities for comment and action. In some cases, income has since been recovered and remedial action taken. Ministers are clearly worried about the political repercussions and keen to see effective controls set up.

Torbay

'No action is initiated to collect charges from private out-patients attending the chest clinic at Torbay hospital although the records in the clinic are suitably endorsed to show that certain patients are private and not NHS. The patients concerned are referred by a hospital consultant from his consulting rooms in a private clinic'.

Darlington

'The stationery in use in the authority did not provide for the status of the patient to be recorded. With certain exceptions, consultants referring patients from private consultations, either in or out of the hospital, failed to indicate the status of the patient on the diagnostic request forms or other records.

'On 21 April 1984 my staff interviewed the Senior Chief Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer who stated that even though one consultant was marking his test/request forms as private all were treated as NHS referrals.

'Ear, Nose and Throat: Following enquiries a consultant's secretary admitted to having destroyed agreement forms signed by private patients. My staff were able to identify 27 patients for whom no hospital accounts had been raised. This matter is the subject of an internal enquiry by senior officers.'

South Tees

'As a result of the audit activity seven consultants have acknowledged, with varying degrees of precision, that private consultations have taken place and that an undertaking to pay was not obtained from the patient. The information from these consultants indicates that at least three hundred consultations a year have taken place.'

Category I

Consultants also carry out other non-NHS work for which payment is sometimes due to the health authority. This so-called 'Category II' work consists mostly of examinations for government departments, insurance companies and solicitors, which doctors carry out as part of their job, but are allowed to charge for. If this involves use of NHS facilities — not premises — one third of the fee should come to the NHS.

'In the period April 1983 to May 1984 £3,203 was received by the Authority but most of this was received from two consultants in secondary specialties. Almost all primary consultants had paid nothing to the Authority in the period yet audit enquiries indicated that a considerable volume of Category II work was being performed.

Selective checks revealed: 'Consultants in the Ear, Nose and Throat department at North Riding hospital had been producing DHSS medical reports which required an audiometry test in all cases. No payment had been made to the authority but sums have been paid into an unofficial Audiology Improvement Fund which is not under the control of the authority. I understand from one of the consultants concerned that DHSS Category II payments are the only source of income to this fund. The balance in the fund of about £6,500 clearly indicates the minimum amount due to the authority in respect of DHSS reports alone from the three consultants concerned.'

South Tees ambulances

'In [nine] letters . . . the Ambulance Liaison Officer has drawn attention to the commissioning of the private Nuffield hospital at Norton, the potential impact on ambulance services, and quotes examples of private patients being transported in NHS ambulances. The correspondence draws attention to DHSS guidance and records the officer's view that a system of charging should be introduced. No action has been taken to assess and to bring to account sums due to the authority.

'Ambulances take patients for convalescence to homes in Cumbria and Ilkley. In the period February 1983 to May 1984 fifty journeys were noted where patients had been taken to one or other location. At £3.50 per mile a double return journey can cost as much as £1,000 for a patient admission to the Ilkley home and £2,000 to the home in Cumbria.'

Sheffield

Royal Hallamshire hospital

Physiotherapy: 'The Unit Administrator of the Royal Hallamshire hospital wrote to all consultants on the 25 April 1983 saying that any patient referred from private rooms would be classified as 'private' unless the referral letter specifically states otherwise and gives the reason. This letter is not complied with.

'Audit tests revealed:

- one consultant has a closed session, to which only he may refer patients. Many of the patients referred are from his private consulting rooms and I understand that all were said to be NHS patients. No private patient accounts were raised during 1983/84 for this consultant;
- in the seven months May to November 1983, 111 patients were identified as being referred to the treatment centre from private consulting rooms. Private patient accounts were raised for only four. 73 of the 111 referrals were from the consultant mentioned above;
- during 1983/84 there were only eight 'private' cases out of approximately 4,600 referrals, whilst in the first five months of 1984 only one private out-patient has been identified; and
- treatment centre staff do not make enquiries to check the status of patients, which is determined by the referring consultant.'

Northern General hospital

Radiology: 'Consultant radiologists are responsible for raising their own private non-resident patient accounts. They periodically (there being no set frequency) submit a list to the finance department together with a cheque in respect of the income due to the authority.

'Agreement-to-pay forms are only completed in exceptional circumstances and are normally signed by the consultant; copies are said to have been forwarded to the finance department, but at the close of the audit these had not been traced.

Gt Ormond St

(Hospitals for Sick Children)

'Referrals to the Pathology department from out-patient clinics may go undetected and

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uncharged as no routine system exists for recording tests and notifying cases to reception staff within the private consulting rooms at 34 Great Ormond Street, whose responsibility it is to coordinate patient charges.

'My overall conclusion was that financial controls were poor or non-existent and that it was fortuitous that the diligence of staff had prevented significant loss.'

West Suffolk

'The system relied upon the consultant (or in certain cases the referring GP) identifying each private non-resident patient and providing details of treatment to the administrative office for accounts to be rendered to the patients. A number of Consultants repeatedly failed to comply with these arrangements. The status of patients was sometimes also recorded in various other hospital records.

'In certain cases (for example in the Pathology department) officers of the authority were notified of private non-resident patients by the consultants but failed to take the necessary action for accounts to be raised.'

Nottingham

'An audit test check of the records showed that:-

- at the University hospital there were eight instances in 1983/84 where debtor accounts were raised only after enquiries had been made by health insurance companies or patients. The income collected in these cases totalled £9,980.80 but the hospital system had not identified the patients as private;
- although ward bed state returns do not normally identify private patients (see above), a scrutiny of a sample of these returns at the university hospital showed six patients identified as private for whom no accounts have been sent, involving potential income of £1,349.40;
- private patients in the City hospital maternity unit are only charged for two days on the grounds that if their stay in hospital exceeds 48 hours their continued occupation of the bed must be on medical grounds and is therefore free of charge. In 1983, a total of £2,293.50 additional income would have accrued if the patients had been charged for the extra days.

Coventry

'The failure of the authority to introduce effective systems for the collection of income from private non-resident patients was drawn to the attention of members of the District Management Team on 16 December 1982. A further review of these arrangements in May 1984 revealed that effective systems had still not been introduced and that substantial amounts of income were not being collected.

'Hospital charges were regularly collected by consultants and this income was retained by consultants for periods of up to one year. When this account was remitted to the finance department the names of patients treated were not always supplied. The authority was unable to verify that all income due was collected.'

Salford

Pathology private out-patients charges: 'An agreement between management and certain medical staff allows the authority to collect the medical and hospital fees for all tests on a two-thirds/one-third share basis, as for Category II treatment, without identifying private out-patients for the purpose of the statutory accounts. Also for certain tests the hospital's share is less than the required statutory charge as set out in the Departmental circular.

Wakefield

'Examination of correspondence dated between April 1983 and April 1984, relating to private medical practice in the District, revealed a number of instances where compliance with recognised procedures did not take place, summarised as follows.

- *Referral of a patient direct to Pinderfields hospital X-ray department as an NHS patient when she had previously attended consultant's rooms in a private capacity.*
- *Evidence of two attempts to 'manufacture' an NHS number where private patients were to be referred from rooms, in order to suggest or mislead that a patient was being referred from the NHS system.*

Shropshire

'Audit established from discussion with two orthopaedic consultants that, in the period April 1983 to May 1984, of 81 patients they had referred from their rooms for X-ray, 33 were private patients, 16 were Category II and 32 were NHS.

'The Category II and private patients were not notified to the administration for charges to be collected.

'The authority should claim their element of the Category II fee, but the private patient element may be lost as no undertaking to pay was completed. The loss of income from the private patient element is £650 p.a. and the potential Category II income is estimated at approximately £200.

'In the circumstances I am unable to give an assurance that all income due to the Authority for private patients has been collected, nor can I confirm that no abuse of the current regulations relating to private patients has occurred.'

Semi-private beds

Another area where the NHS can lose out is in NHS 'semi-private beds', where patients are accommodated in single rooms or small wards, which they pay for, but receive treatment on the NHS. These semi-private beds are known as 'section 63 accommodation'.

'At the Shropshire Orthopaedic hospital in 1983/84, at least eight patients who were occupying section 63 accommodation were examined by the radiologist on a private basis and paid for their examinations. Four of these were referred by one consultant who was able to confirm that one of them was a private patient of his during the period in question, and the other three, though having been private patients of his in the past, were not seen personally by him or charged medical fees for the periods in question.

'If all eight of the section 63 patients who were examined on a private basis by the radiologist should have been section 65 patients, the loss to the authority in 1983/84 is approximately £13,000.'

Oxfordshire

John Radcliffe hospital

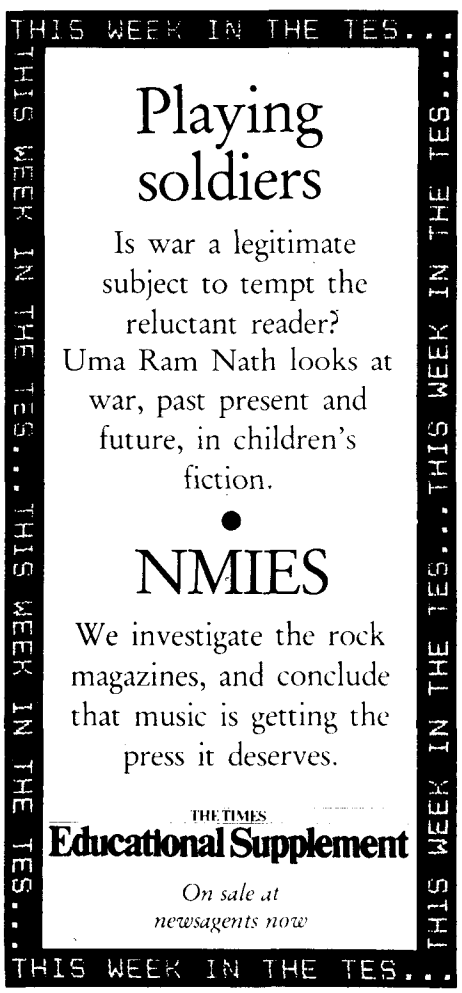
'Cases were found where patients are shown as NHS but are in fact private and no charge has been made although the consultant has charged a fee. To date fees totalling almost £1,000 have been identified from this source.

'BUPA have written to the authority on a number of occasions requesting accounts for patients treated privately at the hospital. The authority were unaware at the time of the receipt of the letter from BUPA that these patients had been treated privately.

'The opinion is held in several Oxford University medical departments that private out-patients seen on university premises are not liable for a hospital charge as a private patient. The hospital retains clinical responsibility for patients and therefore a fee is due and potential private patient income is being lost. The level of potential loss has not been calculated.'

Radiology: 'A comparison of the university printout with hospital accounts showed numerous instances where hospital income was due but had not been charged. This was the result of failures to obtain agreement forms and failures to charge USAF patients from Upper Heyford. Losses identified by Audit amount to £745.'

Statistics: 'Annual statistics submitted to DHSS for private outpatients in no way reflect the level of private patient activity in the hospital.' □



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Cont'd from p.11

interest in developing weapons.

Thus in 1975 West Germany sold Brazil a complete nuclear fuel cycle, including enrichment and reprocessing plants. In 1980 a West German Swiss consortium sold a nuclear power station and heavy water plant to Argentina. Britain is currently involved in trying to sell a reactor to China. In the mid-1970s it became known that 15 nuclear exporters, including Britain, had privately got together to establish their own controls over exports — controls which turned out to be considerably less rigorous than those required under the NPT. Known as the 'London Club' because of where it met, this group was seen by many NNWS as a deliberate attempt to subvert the treaty.

The US and the UK have violated the spirit of the treaty by trading between themselves in essential weapons ingredients like plutonium and tritium — sometimes from civilian reactors. Understandably, the NNWS have been upset by what they see as the absence of any adequate guarantees that they will not be attacked with nuclear weapons by the NWS, underlined by the fact that the British appear to have sent a nuclear missile submarine to the South Atlantic during the Falklands War.

They are also unhappy at the fact that they are required to submit their nuclear installations to full-scope IAEA safeguards, whilst activities in the NWS are only superficially overseen. In Britain none of the electricity boards' nuclear plants and none of their alleged 17 tonnes of plutonium are inspected by the IAEA. The situation at the Sellafield reprocessing plant, where all international inspections have been prevented by the British government on the grounds that the plant serves a dual civil and military function, is an outright affront to the NPT, which is crucially dependent on a proper distinction being made between civil and military activities.

The nuclear industry argues that it has prevented new countries from openly acquiring nuclear arsenals and that the obligations under Article IV of the NPT to facilitate 'the fullest possible exchange' of 'peaceful' nuclear technologies and materials should be more enthusiastically pursued. It supports, in other words, more of the same 'carrot and stick' policy.

The anti-nuclear lobby points out that the treaty did not prevent India from exploding a nuclear device in 1974. They argue that it has not prevented South Africa and Israel developing a nuclear capability and may not prevent Pakistan and Argentina from attempting the same. They think that Article IV — the treaty's most palpable flaw — should be ignored, but that more attention should be paid to Article VI. In the last resort, they say, genuine world security can only come when all nations, led by the NWS, have abandoned both nuclear power and nuclear weapons.

In spite of all its problems, most opinion on both sides is in favour, at least in the short term, of preserving the NPT. Some industry hardliners might favour a completely unrestricted nuclear market; and fringes of the anti-nuclear lobby might argue that the treaty is best allowed to die. But in the real world we cannot afford to do without it, however fragile and ineffectual it may be. If the NPT collapsed, because significant numbers of developing countries lost their patience and walked out, there would be nothing, except nuclear mayhem, to replace it.

That is why European anti-nuclear activists have recently agreed to support the US disarmament lobby's campaign for a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing (*NS* 18 January 1985). One of the main international campaign groups, Greenpeace, points out that the shared desire of Britain, America and Russia to save the NPT offers 'a window of opportunity' for getting a moratorium on nuclear weapons testins. Such a step towards nuclear disarmament is important as it would halt the development of new first-strike weapons systems and would seriously impede the 'Star Wars' initiative.

It has been backed by a broad spectrum of political opinion in the West (including former British Prime Minister James Callaghan and US Senator Edward Kennedy). In February the Soviet Union and China both announced their willingness to negotiate a comprehensive and verifiable test ban treaty. Crucially, one of the key 'nearly nuclear' states, Argentina, has even offered to join the NPT if a test ban is signed.

A test ban offers the only realistic hope of a breakthrough before the NPT review conference in September. If the nuclear weapons states can be persuaded to endorse such a ban before then, the prospects for the NPT could be transformed. If not, the future is indeed bleak. □

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

A DELIBERATE FLOUTING

Liberal MP Paddy Ashdown takes the US, USSR and Britain to task for reducing treaties to scraps of paper

IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS the state of relations between nations is generally more important than formal treaties. This is a comforting thought, for the whole network of treaties which underpin peace and restrain escalation and nuclear proliferation are now under threat.

There are four key treaties which together form the flood wall (albeit pretty leaky) against the pressures of the nuclear arms race and the spread of nuclear weapons. They also comprise the rough base structure around which the renewed Geneva talks might build something more substantial in the future. They are the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963; the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968; the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) of 1972 and the Second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) of 1979.

Three of these four are now under severe strain and could fail altogether in 1985. Rob Edwards discusses (above) the threats to the NPT and to Salt II. The superpowers now appear to be completely disregarding the 1972 ABM Treaty.

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It recognised that 'measures to limit anti-ballistic missile systems would . . . decrease . . . the risk of outbreak of war involving nuclear weapons'. Consequently, the US and the USSR agreed, under Article I 'not to deploy AMB systems for the defence of the territory of its country . . . [or] for the defence of an individual region', except that each is allowed to have one ABM system round their capital and one round their main missile site.

Under the Treaty [Article V], developing and testing ABM systems which are space-based is specifically forbidden. There can be no doubt that President Reagan's 'Star Wars' plan breaches Article V of the Treaty, and will in time breach Article I as well. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union appears to be in the process of building a huge new phased array ABM radar at Krasnoyarsk in direct contravention to Article III of the Treaty.

Unless there is a dramatic change of heart of the sort which, it appears, Mrs Thatcher unsuccessfully pressed on President Reagan on her visit earlier this year, the ABM treaty is in danger during 1985 of becoming just another meaningless piece of paper gathering dust in the archives.

MEANWHILE, the review of the NPT in September would have been difficult enough, without Britain adding to the pressures, by purchasing Trident. Article I of the NPT says 'Each nuclear-weapon State . . . undertakes not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons . . . or control over such weapons . . . directly or indirectly.' At the time that the NPT was signed (1968) Britain was already producing Polaris warheads using design, or 'do-it-yourself' kits transferred from the US under a 1958 US/UK agreement. That this was regarded as an indirect transfer of nuclear weapons at the time is made clear in 1958 Congressional hearings on the agreement, recently unearthed by Sussex University's Dr Norman Dombey. Harold Wilson made the same point, saying that Britain was dependent on the US 'for the know-how necessary for the building of the Polaris armed submarines *and for the supply of the weapons*' (my emphasis).

This fact was accounted for in the drafting of Article I of the NPT which specifically did not ban pre-existing transfers between nuclear weapon states, only future ones, such as we now intend with Trident. Furthermore, since the NPT is incorporated into US domestic law, this is a matter which, it seems, could be tested in a US court.

What makes the position of Britain and the US doubly sensitive on Trident, however, is that both nations are not just ordinary parties to NPT — they are Depositary States of the Treaty, too (the third is the USSR). If those who are supposed to be the guardians of the NPT are seen to be its chief infringers, what chance is there that the non-nuclear states will restrain themselves from getting in on the act as well? And what chance a renewal?

We have seen the mood of East-West relations swing between good and bad before. In the past the treaty framework, however inadequate, has nevertheless been there to be strengthened in good times and to fall back on, in bad. If this framework collapses, we will only be protected from a quantum leap forward in nuclear arms production and proliferation by the current whims of our leaders. □

Tories woo Channel 4 pinkos

John Ellis

AN AMAZING spectacle is taking place in broadcasting at the moment. It's not on the screen, it's in what used to be called 'smoke filled rooms'. As Michael Leapman reported last week (*New Statesman* 3 May) the free marketeers of the right, in unholy alliance with liberal independent producers, are after the BBC.

It seems bizarre on the face of it. That bastion of conservative values, the BBC, is under sustained attack from the very Tories who should be supporting it. And even more remarkable, Channel 4, only a couple of years ago the pariah of broadcasting because of its supposed left-wing bias, has now become the darling of the Tory right.

There's a simple reason. The independent production sector, largely created by and for Channel 4, has become one of the very few successes of Thatcherite economic policies. Where once there were a few mega-corporations (BBC and the ITV companies), there are now dozens of small production companies, and a burgeoning technical facilities sector.

So now we find very strange bedfellows. Tory MPs hold discussions with the Channel 4 independent producers' trade association, IPPA. The liberal David Elstein and populist David Graham address the Adam Smith Institute with ingenious plans for remodelling British broadcasting. The creator of *Brookside*, Phil Redmond, tells all comers that independents can do the same job as the institutionalised broadcasters, only much cheaper.

These producers are playing a dangerous game; perhaps naively, but since both Graham and Elstein are current affairs specialists, we have to assume that there is some political calculation involved. Their game is dangerous because they are advocating a purely structural solution to broadcasting's problems. All the solutions involve some kind of dismantling of the BBC, which is perceived from all sides as a gigantic bureaucracy which has lost any sense of direction and purpose. This is true enough. But is the answer to make a purely organisational change designed to open a new competitive era? I doubt it.

Italy provides one parallel. A few years ago, there was only state-run TV, the RAI, a broadcasting organisation more concerned with keeping a political truce within its bureaucracy between Christian Democrats, Communists and Socialists than it was with providing entertainment for its audience. Then some entrepreneurs challenged the RAI monopoly of *local* (not national) broadcasting, and the courts decided in their favour. The immediate result: an explosion of local TV outlets of all kinds — pornography, lunacy, rock videos, religion, old movies, quiz shows, anarchism. A little later, economic survival and the supply of product came to dominate the imagination of these hundreds of little local broadcasters. And the result: the creation, from a publishing base, of a network system by Silvio Berlusconi. Now his networks dominate, and his explicit aim is to challenge and beat the RAI to become Italy's new dominant TV supplier. This whole evolution from monopoly to infinite diversity to duopoly has taken less than ten years.

The arguments about deregulation of broadcasting, about a vast increase in the competitive element in our broadcasting system, have to be measured against the Italian case. The problem is one of resources. The Italian economy could not possibly sustain the investment needed to produce the tens of thousands of hours of broadcasting that are implied in the ideas of deregulation and vast audience choice. Neither can the British economy. So any policy for the reform of British broadcasting has to plan for realistic levels of expenditure, concentrated in organisations that can make constructive use of it, rather then decentralised to such an extent that all any one broadcasting outlet can do is to buy cheap shows from the USA, Brazil and Japan.

Channel 4 is an example of an organisation that concentrates resources such that it can afford to commission all kinds of programmes from independent producers. Indeed, it remains the only major outlet for independents, which is why some of them are campaigning to widen their possible markets. The obvious target is the BBC, all the more attractive since many Channel 4 suppliers (eg. David Graham, Phil Redmond) used to work there. But their call for a massive deregulation of TV in order to introduce 'more competition' is fundamentally mistaken.

Channel 4 is not a free market: it has, however incoherently, a cultural policy on which to base its commissioning. The BBC used to have a cultural policy too, the notion of 'public service broadcasting'. The BBC's lack of direction stems from the demise of this *cultural* policy in the face of Thatcherism's quite justified attack on paternalist forms of government. But all that Thatcherism has to put in the place of a cultural politics based on notions of 'public service' is a market politics of false populism: the people choose, and express their choice through market forces.

Any solution to the problems of broadcasting based on organisational solutions alone will inevitably fall into this trap at the present. So the Elsteins, Grahams and Redmonds should be spending their time working out a new *cultural* policy for broadcasting rather than making up ingenious models for a 'competitive' broadcasting structure. Above all, we need a cultural policy that asks what kind of broadcasting, for whom, and at what price to the economy. □

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DIARY

I have yet to meet a freeborn Englishman. Indeed, I doubt very much if such a person has ever existed. (True, I have been privileged to meet a small number of freeborn Englishwomen — but all of them, I realise, stem from Central Europe, North America or the antipodes.) We are a land of subjects. Britons may never have been slaves, a historic and honourable distinction to be sure, but we have yet to be free. Which is why the issue of civil liberties is so important, and why the imbroglio at the NCCL should concern us all. The critical problem for the labour movement so called — a term I detest as it seems to have less to do with socialism than with the bowels — is to realise that its own house also has never been built with respect for liberty. The Left participates fully in the general lack of freedom in Britain. Take Tony Benn's recent argument for a new Reform Bill. Benn was the first leading politician close to the centre of power to denouce the utterly undemocratic structures of the British regime. This will be to his lasting credit. But when he argues for real power to be transferred back to the House of Commons, he says nothing about the first-past-the-post electoral system or Labour's bloc votes. While Parliamentary majorities are themselves inherently undemocratic no democrat will cry for Parliament. Similarly, the failure of the miners to ballot casts a long shadow. That's one reason why Ron Todd is absolutely right to demand a new leadership vote if he is to run the T&G.

○

As for the NCCL, Larry Gostin's abstract notion of individual freedom — a real Americanism — assumes that we can all be equal at every given moment: hence the foolishness of his formula, 'The freedom not to take part in a strike is as much a fundamental right as is the right to strike'. Yet it misses the point to pose 'collective rights', whatever that might mean, against individual rights in this case, as some on the Left have done. Obviously there is a right not to strike. For example, I would have backed any docker who refused to join the strike in support of Powellite racialism in 1968. More important is the individual right to participate equally in any decision to strike. Here one's rights to be for or against strike action *are* equal. But once the decision has been taken it has sovereignty. This is true for all collective processes such as elections and referendums. Provided it is taken democratically — which is where rights come in — the decision to strike binds one. Your freedom to disregard the outcome is less than your duty to support the decision. Those who do not are scabs. The way the *Daily Express* recently endorsed the purge of four Yorkshire miners is interesting in this respect: 'The four deserve to be sacked. They were using the evil word "scab".' The Right hates any idea of collective, self-determined loyalty. For the Left to defend it, however, the process of decision needs to be scrupulously democratic.

○

What was the *Guardian* doing when it headlined 'Reagan balm washes Bitburg scars'? His visit to the SS cemetery was explicitly aimed to transform the memory of the war against fascism into a moral war against the Soviet Union, which actually defeated Nazi Germany. Citing Kennedy's famous remark, 'Ich bin ein Berliner' Reagan said in his speech, 'I am a Jew... an Afghan... a prisoner of the Gulag... a Cambodian...' He, who directly funds Pol Pot, is a Cambodian! But not a South African black. 'I, too, am a potential victim of totalitarianism,' he concluded. Selective totalitarianism indeed. The headline should have been, 'Reagan declares "Ich bin SS"'. I complained about it all to Salman Rushdie. He reassured me that America has to be blind, because if it let itself know what it did it would lose its sense of moral superiority, over the Soviet Union especially. I think there is a neat theory of Reaganism in this precise, if off-the-cuff comment. He may be senile, but America needs a President without any sense of geography, history or facts in order to believe in its own goodness. Anyway, a *Berliner* is a doughnut.

ROGER WODDIS

Bad dream

'I want people to have the right to property, occupational pensions, the right to shares . . . that is my dream.' — Mrs Thatcher

I have a dream
(Having been to the mountain-top
And seen the promised land)
That one day this nation will rise up
And live out the true meaning of greed.
I see a land flowing with milk and honey,
Where the entrepreneur is not judged
By the quality of his character,
But by the colour of his money.

I have a dream
That one day employer and worker,
Landlord and tenant,
Property-owner and private occupational pensioner
Will walk hand in hand
Through a wilderness of cashable things,
Where the teacher and the nurse
And the poet who sings
Market their goods at a competitive price.

I have a dream
Of a frozen land where nothing changes,
Except the amplitude of lies,
And when the veneer wears thin,
There will be a way to deal with
The enemy within.

○

Still a grass widow, I have migrated to my natural habitat of central London. A solitary pasta is so much better when you buy it fresh from Camisa's. As I took my first bag of washing into the Soho laundrette, Betty gave me a welcome kiss — and it's wonderful what a kiss can do. I was back in the community! Betty tells me that my family must be glad to be rid of me for a while. Which is more reassuring than *The Times* which recently carried a feature that declared it is now fashionable to be single. I scanned it eagerly for tips. The author complained that it was hard to find single as opposed to playboy men. Finally she tracked down 'the genuine article'. This turned out to be Mark Todd, a horseman pursuing what he termed his 'eventing career' from a small cottage in Wiltshire 'surrounded by a retinue' — no less — 'of female grooms'. I've been told not to write 'Islander' in the style of an armchair socialist. But I have to admit that on reading this I snorted with virtuous contempt: I bet he doesn't iron his own shirts!

○

I took advantage of the glories of London life to attend the first night of *Pravda*. For the correct assessment you must turn the pages to Benedict Nightingale (p.29). But I knew I was right to enjoy it when I read the review in the *Sunday Times*. It is true that the opposition to the dramatic rise of the newspaper tycoon is derisory. But Brenton and Hare have described their play as 'a reader's revenge', on the press that is. And if revenge is a poor basis for a political programme it's still tremendous fun.

Islander

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MITTERRAND'S SHOW-DOWN

No to Star Wars says Mitterrand in true Gaullist style. But the four-year 'socialist project' has relied too much on the President's will reports Denis MacShane

FOUR YEARS AGO, 10 May 1981, and it seemed as if half of Paris was crammed into the Place de la Bastille. Hundreds of thousands were there in the biggest outpouring onto the streets of Paris since May 1968. They were celebrating the presidential election of François Mitterrand, already then in his 65th year and the most rigorously determined opponent of French conservatism since General de Gaulle transformed French politics in 1958.

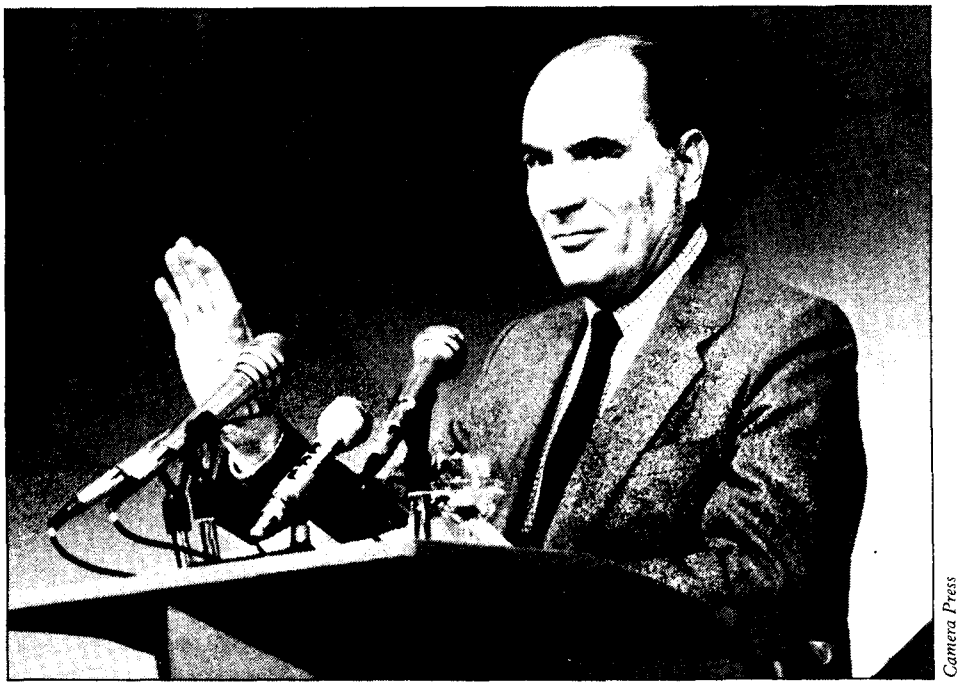
The reference to de Gaulle is important because to much of the French Left Mitterrand embodied the hope for a kind of socialist de Gaulle, a leader with sufficient sense of history, strength of purpose and political will to carry through a reorganisation of political and economic structures to mark out a new France.

In the last half century France has known short moments of socialist rule — Leon Blum's legendary Popular Front government of 1936, Pierre Mendès-France's eight month administration in 1954, various coalition governments during the Fourth Republic. But overall the country's historic experience of socialist administration seemed to be like that of the Paris Commune: brief, intense, but quickly snuffed out by reaction.

Hence the excitement in May 1981 at the prospect of seven long years of Mitterrand's rule. The victory that shortly followed in the National Assembly election meant that nothing appeared to stand in the way of the realisation of a socialist project in France.

Yet so much seemed to rest on the shoulders of the short, stocky Mitterrand, product of a Catholic bourgeois family from *la France profonde*. The Socialist Party was a rag-bag of competing factions, a mix of Paris intellectuals, municipal strongholds and embracing two contradictory principles — that of the strong centralised state which under socialist direction would control, indeed abolish the excesses of capital, and, on the other hand, the tradition of democratic decentralisation, a philosophy that goes back through Jaurès to Proudhon, and which emerged in the 1970s as *autogestion*, a concept poorly translated as 'workers' control' but containing ideas of co-operation and community and, above all, based on control from below rather than direction from above.

Regulating these contradictions and developing the social support to carry out the ambitions and hopes of the victorious Socialist Party of May 1981, would require historic vision and political skills given to few individuals. The adjectives applied by French political pundits to Mitterrand have not varied over 30 years — elusive, Florentine, contradictory, cunning, glacial. At one level his life is detailed and open — 10 years as a highly publicised Fourth Republic minister, followed by more than 20 high-profile years as one of the leaders, then *the* leader of socialist opposition under the Fifth Republic.



Camera Press

When everything seemed possible: Mitterrand in 1981

But as one ploughs through the millions of words by and about him, a certain quality of mystery remains. His capacity to surprise, however, is astonishing: appointing the babyish Laurent Fabius as prime minister over the heads of better qualified but duller alternatives; a bizarre trip to Crete to meet Libya's Colonel Gadafy; selling arms to Nicaragua. The long-term effect of his latest *coup du theatre*, the switch to proportional representation to elect the National Assembly, will not be clear until after the elections take place. Between now and those elections, due this time next year, what other surprises does he have in store?

THE LACK OF unity in the opposition, the dead fish faces of the ever squabbling Giscard d'Estaing, Jacques Chirac and Raymond Barre belonging to a past rather than representing a future, means that Mitterrand occupies the centre stage to an extent that is more than just due to being president. He has more direct personal power than the leader of any other democratic country. He appoints the government which carries out his policy. He alone decides foreign policy and determines military engagements.

So as France reflects upon four years of socialist government, and as outsiders judge the results of Mitterrand's rule, it is very much the man himself who is in the scales. Judging by the hopes of French socialists who celebrated the victory of 1981 not much has been achieved. Judging by the hopes of socialists in Britain and Germany, especially those who consider that socialism equals nuclear disarmament, Mitterrand has been more than a disappointment. (His rejection of the Star Wars project owes more to nationalism than a commitment to nuclear arms reduction.) There are 2.5 million out of work compared with 1.8 million in 1981. France's growth has been lower than its main European partners in the past three years and the prediction for 1985 is still a low one per cent increase. Despite a deflationary policy since 1982, and a sharp cut in living standards, inflation at seven per cent is still above that of West Germany or Britain.

The radical measures taken by Mitterrand in 1981, a period when he faithfully tried to implement the programme on which he had been elected, are held to be the cause of today's economic malaise. The wholesale nationalisations of basic industries such as steel and sunrise industries in the telecommunication, chemical and high-tech sectors, plus the public ownership of the banks, failed to do the trick. Cutting the working week while maintaining wage levels and raising the minimum legal wage pumped demand into the economy which was mainly used to buy imports from West Germany.

The abrupt reversal when the 1981 policy led to rapid inflation and massive runs on the franc has ever since dominated French economic relationships. A number of remarkable political developments such as the rise of the racist National Front party, the collapse of the French

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intellectual Left to be replaced by a sordid neo-liberal, crudely anti-Soviet gang of well-paid sophists and the campaign over controlling the Catholic schools, which pulled 1½ million right-wing demonstrators onto the streets of Paris in 1983 — all have their roots in the failure of the economic programme.

Mitterrand has some of the sharpest, most imaginative political brains in West Europe working for him. But neither they nor he are economists and he seems to have little idea of how to get the economy moving again. The other missing key factor in France is a coherent trade union movement. Fewer than one in six workers belongs to a union and the three main confederations spend more time fighting each other than uniting around common demands or acting as a social partner in a Swedish, West German or Austrian style. A democratic socialist economic programme depends on the existence of a strong, progressive self-confident trade union movement able to mediate its implementation. That simply doesn't exist in France. Nor during his long career has Mitterrand shown any interest in supporting trade unions. No workers, no union leaders have ever been numbered among his friends or advisors.

MITTERRAND HAS tried in vain to secure some co-operation from the other EEC countries. He naively believed that Mrs Thatcher and the West German government would join in a kind of Keynes-plus reflation in 1981 and has begged for support for common European research projects ever since. He is the only European leader to be constantly, publicly critical of US international economic and financial policy. Cutting France off from Europe, taking what the French call the Polish or Albanian road, is simply not possible. France has borders with six other trading countries. It cannot opt out.

So if Mitterrand's economic possibilities are constrained he has turned to other measures to give an image of dynamism to his government. Radio and television are to be loosened up. One thousand private local radio stations and 80 new television stations are to be created. Jean Pierre Chevènement, the leader of the left-wing CERES group, is now Minister of Education and out Josephing Sir Keith in his insistence on a return to high standards in the schools (see *NS* 3 May).

It is in his latest project of proportional representation (PR) that Mitterrand is taking his biggest risks. The idea is plain: to squeeze to the fringe both the French Communist Party and the racist National Front, both with about 10 per cent of the popular vote, and leave France to be governed by an undefined centre, a coalition in which the Socialists would also play a part. There can be little doubt that the 1986 National Assembly elections, if fought on the present electoral system which is an eliminatory first-past-the-post vote held over two rounds, would result in a massive defeat for both socialists and communists. The Right would end up with four out of every five seats. But whether they could then unite to decide upon a prime minister, and what the government's relationship with the socialist president would be is an endless debate for constitutional theoreticians. A PR-elected assembly would be a very different proposition and could leave Mitterrand in a commanding position.

Attention has so far been focussed on the number of deputies the National Front will obtain — at present they find it hard to get past the eliminating round. More important, and this is clearly Mitterrand's intention, is that the Socialist Party will finally cut loose from the Communist Party.

No one seems too worried at that prospect as the shrinking, still internally Stalinist, cringingly pro-Soviet, French Communist Party is not much of a vote-catcher these days. But it is still a powerfully implanted key opposition force that should not be written off. It certainly has a role to play for the Socialist Party, over half of whose deputies in the National Assembly are teachers, and which has only the most tenuous links with the working class. A rootless Socialist Party floating in the centre, hoping to enter coalitions with rather more purposeful parties of the Right, hardly seems a long-term beacon of hope even if it does help keep Mitterrand in effective power until 1988. '*L'état, c'est moi*', said Louis XIV. '*Le parti, c'est moi*', appears to be Mitterrand's response.

Michel Rocard, long a Mitterrand opponent and one of the few prominent socialists who argued prior to 1981 that nationalisation plus wage increases ahead of productivity would lead to disaster, and who called instead for a real decentralisation of state power founded on control at the base, resigned from his post as Minister of Agriculture, in protest over the PR proposal. He sees it leading to the government instability of the Fourth Republic. But there is an element of personal ambition here. Rocard now offers himself as the man of principle, ready to take over the Socialist Party, should the PR gamble fail and Mitterrand's head be called for after 1986 or 1988.

Rocard is also taking a chance because one thing stands out in Mitterrand's life. He is a supreme survivor; physically in the Resistance during the war; politically in the Fourth Republic; ideologically and organisationally during the long re-birth of the Socialist Party after 1968.

Jean Daniel, editor of the *Nouvel Observateur*, has written recently that France is witnessing the death of the 1968 generation — their hopes and values crushed between the exigencies of multinational capitalism (or indeed seduced by its pleasures) and the continuing failure of the socialist model, whether of the Soviet communist variety or the democratic socialist Schmidt-Wilson-Callaghan-Mitterrand version. As in Britain and West Germany, there is a new model socialism struggling to be born, though gestation and birth are clearly long and difficult. The French experience since 1981 surely marks the end of a certain style of democratic socialist government not the beginning of a new era.

As Mitterrand ponders his four years of power and looks ahead to the instability that appears inevitable after the next year's elections he might ask whether a little more socialism and a little less *Mitterrandisme* would have left both the country and its president in better shape for the second half of the 1980s. □

Denis MacShane is the author of François Mitterrand, A Political Odyssey *recently published in paperback by Quartet, £5.95.*

WEST GERMANY

ELDERLY PARTY SEEKS PARTNER

Tony Catterall on the SPD's mood of defeat

Bonn

TWO AND A HALF years after losing power in federal elections, West Germany's Social Democratic Party is still floundering in search of a coherent line which can again make it attractive to the voters. Two state elections in March seemed to suggest it should go to the left, following the success of the radical Oskar Lafontaine who ended 30 years of Christian Democrat government in the Saarland. The supposition was supported by the simultaneous dismal showing — the worst since the Federal Republic was founded — of the SPD in West Berlin under Helmut Schmidt's protegé Hans Apel.

Party headquarters in the modernistic Erich-Ollenhauer Haus in Bonn could not have arranged a better test of the alternatives if it had tried. Lafontaine is young, dynamic and belongs to the far Left of the party, for years on the outside as an opponent of NATO and all things nuclear. Since the rise of the Greens he also advocated working with, rather than against, them. Apel — 'Missile Hans' to the peace movement — was defence minister in Schmidt's last government and is a burnt-out, colourless 'party soldier' from the trade-union-oriented wing, which sees a greater danger from the Greens than from the conservatives.

However, in elections on 12 May Johannes Rau is expected to retain the Premiership of North Rhine-Westphalia, the most heavily populated and industrialised of West Germany's states. Rau, an immensely popular centrist, is the last hope of the right wing, and is also acceptable to the Left. But he is both of the middle generation and also the kind of pragmatist who has led the party into its present impasse. He is also against co-operation with the Greens and — in federal government particularly — a 'reforming majority' does not exist without them.

The Social Democrat right wing secretly sees the answer in a grand coalition with the Christian Democrats, on the basis of 'You look after the economic questions; just leave the social policies to us.' Chairman Willy Brandt and Bundestag leader Hans-Jochen Vogel have even named 'areas of co-operation' with the present government. If the Greens did not exist it would be a realistic way to show the extremely middle-class German populace that the party was again to be trusted with power.

HOWEVER, THEY DO exist, and a 'grand coalition' would make them the only opposition in name as well as in fact: one of the tragedies of the SPD at present is that not only is it incapable of presenting itself as a credible alternative government, but also that even its own MPs see themselves as an ineffective opposition.

The trade union wing, with the active

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Festivals '85

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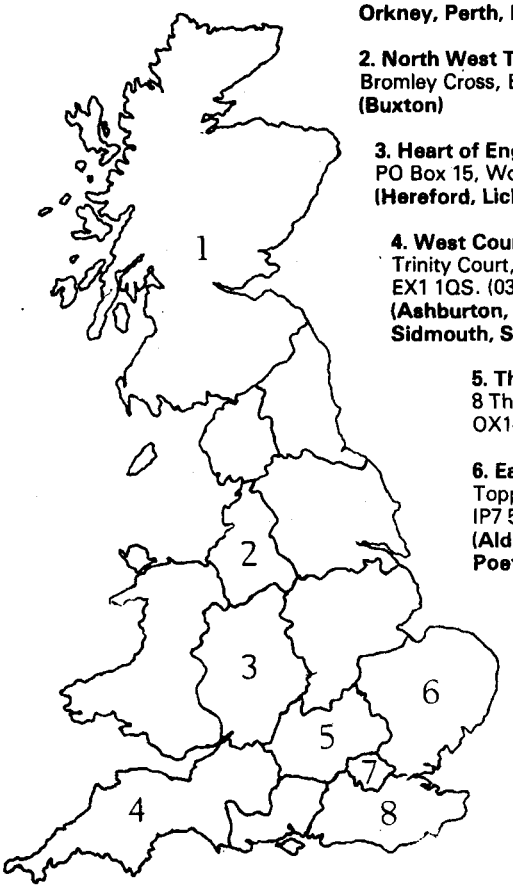

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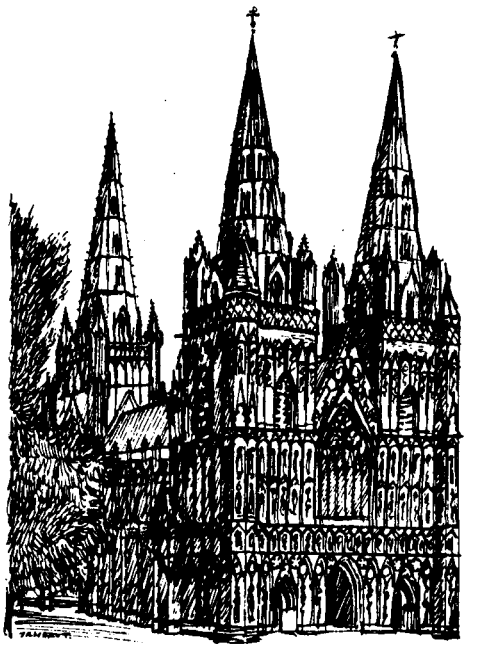

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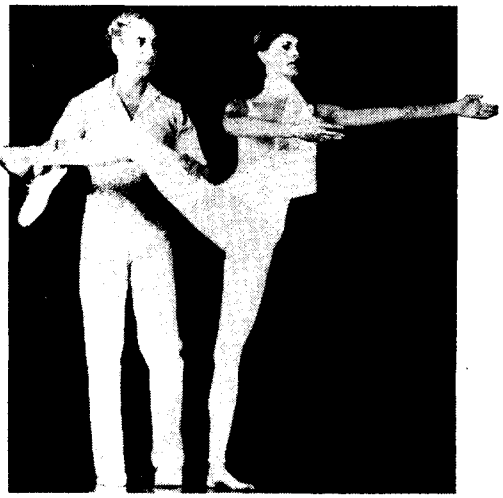

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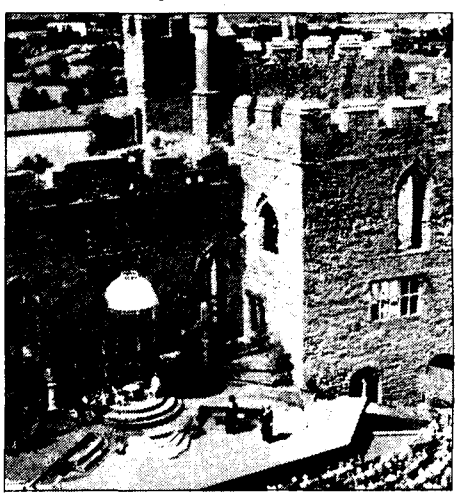

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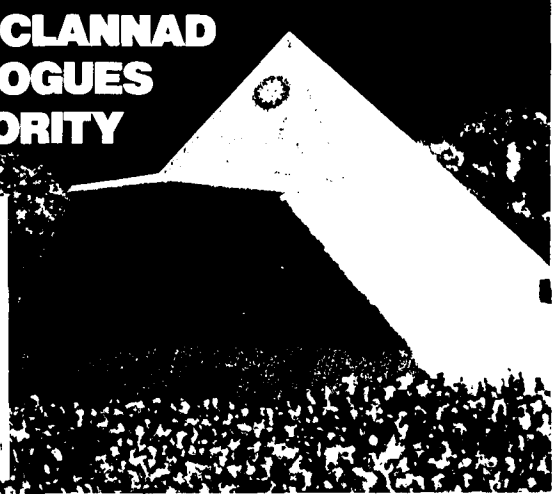

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support of the union leadership, generally stresses that the SPD must 'return to the basic needs of the workers' as its major policy direction, ignoring the fact that the 'classical' SPD voter makes up only about 10 per cent of the electorate. That was recognised as long ago as the end of 1981, by party chair Brandt and party manager Peter Glotz, who tried to reorient towards what Glotz called the 'post-industrial middle class'. But with the arch-traditionalist Helmut Schmidt firmly in charge of the parliamentary party, it was a non-starter.

The right wing saw its perspective confirmed in the 1983 federal election, when Chancellor-candidate Vogel put on — in the words of Petra Kelly of the Greens — a 'coat of quick-dry Green paint'. The only people to believe it were the traditional SPD voters, who deserted the party in droves. It has taken time, but the party has now recognised that it must develop new perspectives. As Glotz put it in a recent paper on party organisation, 'During the period in government the SPD concentrated strongly on the tasks of government, administration and the selection of personnel; the development of a political culture in society and the continuing construction of a political consciousness amongst the population were neglected.'

Accordingly, the party lost its ability to campaign actively on issues, or even to find issues on which to campaign. It must, Glotz says, regain the ability to motivate people behind ideas of reform. Or as one of the SPD leadership hopes for the future, Gerhard Schröder, puts it, 'Until we lost power, even the Young Socialists preached only economic growth as the answer to everything, albeit from a Marxist viewpoint.'

SCHRÖDER, who is candidate for Premier of Lower Saxony in next year's state election, now shares the general left-wing line that a majority 'this side of the CDU' is possible only with Green support, or at least with Green ideas. What it means for them is a real effort to 'reconcile' economic and ecological policies. The new buzz phrase in the party is the 'ecological modernisation of the industrial society' which it is hoped will go a long way to solving unemployment.

However, as Green MP and economist Jo Müller told the *New Statesman*, 'We're going to have to adjust to the idea that a good one third of the workforce is never going to have a job. We're going to have to come up with a way of divorcing work from income: that's the real challenge of the future.'

Yet the real problem for the SPD is that it still contains too many people who think the old Social-Liberal coalition had all the right ideas and fell only through the treachery of the Free Democrats switching coalition partners in mid-stream. In a party with 120 years of tradition behind it, however, change comes only slowly. It is working on a new programme to replace (officially 'supplement') the Godesberg Programme of 1959 — in which Marxism was rejected in favour of the mixed economy — but it is not due to be voted on until the 1988 conference.

When it was pointed out to one party official that there is a federal election to be held one year earlier, and that the SPD should perhaps have a new programme before then he shrugged: 'Oh, we're going to lose then in any case.' □

REFUGEES

SEEKING SAFETY IN CHURCH

Some unlikely Americans are on a smuggling trial reports Jane Dibblin

IN THE MIDDLE of a hot sleepless night in Tucson, Arizona, telephones start ringing. A call has come through that a family — Salvadorean or maybe Guatemalan — is on the other side of the Mexican border. They have heard that the ecumenical church in Tucson has declared itself a sanctuary for Central American refugees and are asking for help.

Jim Corbett, who was one of the founders of the sanctuary movement, or one of his friends, crosses the border to meet the family. The first priority is to assess how best to smuggle them across the border. If an elderly relative is with them who can't walk far, they have to slip through a town. If a member of the family is badly traumatised, though not physically injured, a crossing in the countryside is easier.

Sometimes the Salvadoreans will know a hole in the fence themselves, but need to know a safe house to reach once in the US. Then Jim will advise them how best to pass as Mexican so that if caught, they will simply be put back on the other side and not deported to El Salvador.

Once the crossing has been worked out, other Sanctuary movement supporters arrange pick ups and get the refugees round road blocks. They don't normally look like 'coyotes' (border smugglers). More likely they look like part of the American dream — white, middle-class, often in their 70s or 80s; people for whom this is often their first 'subversive' activity.

Twelve of these unusual subversives are soon to face trial on a total of 70 counts. They include transporting, harbouring and smuggling illegal aliens, which carry a maximum of five years each, plus conspiracy to violate the Immigration and Naturalisation Act, which carries 10 years. It's the first time the authorities have chosen to confront the sanctuary movement, which has been operating for over three years, in a major way.

On 21 May, proceedings open with a federal court judge deciding what evidence is permissible — the prosecution wants to prevent the defence from presenting the jury with any information on human rights, international law, their ethical motivation, or the US government's foreign policy in Central America. As Corbett, who is among the accused, says: 'If we can bring these issues before a jury anywhere in the US we will win.'

Unfortunately, it's unlikely that they will be granted that chance. In a recent 'test' trial of two sanctuary workers, the judge disallowed any such information. And rather than holding the trial in Tucson, where the 12 are from and where there is a high level of community awareness, the trial is scheduled for Phoenix.

However, it is evident that the authorities are sensitive that the trial could be counter-productive. They have insisted on dropping charges against two of the accused — two nuns, who, in an unusual twist to legal proceedings, instructed their own lawyers to prevent the charges from being dropped. But Corbett believes the trial will raise the profile of the sanctuary movement and create even more public sympathy, especially as the defendants include a Presbyterian minister, two Catholic priests, a Methodist social worker, several Quakers, a veteran of the Peace Corps and a woman who was responsible for Cuban refugees for the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS). In addition, 28 others — priests and nuns among them — are named as 'unindicted co-conspirators'.

'The government is making a grave mistake in treating the sanctuary movement as a criminal conspiracy. They have already used tactics such as infiltrating services and Bible groups, with recording vans outside, which even the sheriff of Pima county, Arizona, publicly denounced', says Corbett. 'There are at least 200 churches — various kinds of Christian, plus Jewish — which have declared themselves sanctuaries, and the movement is growing so fast we can't keep up with it. Cities such as Berkeley, California, Madison, Wisconsin and Cambridge, Massachusetts have declared sanctuary and instructed their police forces not to aid the INS.'

Sanctuary owes its roots in part to the underground railway of Harriet Tubman and others, smuggling runaway slaves from the southern states to the safer northern ones. 'Where we differ is that they were in opposition to unjust laws — the Refuge Slave Act — whereas we see ourselves upholding the just Nuremberg and Geneva laws which establish the right to protect refugees.' Indeed when the defendants were let out 'on their own recognisance' (without bail payment) they were obliged to agree not to violate any laws; they issued a statement to the court that their agreement did not mean they would stop smuggling refugees.

According to Corbett, there has been a huge increase in refugees in recent months, as the military has taken to using aerial attacks against the peasant population of El Salvador. He also reports the Mexican government building six detention centres close to the US border. 'One of them alone is designed to process and deport 23,000 people annually. It is being kept on standby, presumably because the US government expects an enormous surge in refugees as it steps up its present policies.' Meanwhile, the British government has recently announced that it intends to offer training to the Salvadorean military. □

This England

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□ Couples who dispense with marriage deprive their children of their surnames as well as any family crests, arms, mottoes or titles, a revised edition of one of the classic works of heraldry, Fox-Davies's 'Complete Guide to Heraldry', published today, points out. — *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* (Vin Arthey)

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LETTERS

NCCL — pure or practical?

Vicky Guedalla, Essex

It's bad enough that NCCL is to limit its own ability to speak as it finds, but to do so in the names of socialism and anti-racism is inexcusable. Refusing to see that Larry Gostin is talking about effectiveness when he says 'NCCL should not regard itself as any more pro-trade unions than anti-police', the majority at the AGM has handed our opponents an easy excuse to dismiss us while relegating NCCL to preach self-righteously to the converted. Yet Louise Christian (*NS* 3 May) has the gall to cavil about the adequacy of 'pure' lines!

The inference that NCCL's commitment to 'the existence and effectiveness of trade unions' has been in doubt is pure mischief. The issue is whether an unshakeable commitment to TU rights should deprive NCCL of the capacity to comment if and when particular actions by unions collide with other rights.

It is to its own effectiveness and independence that NCCL now needs to look. Without these its other commitments are pure self-indulgence without practical significance. When the AGM rejected the proposition 'that only considerations of civil liberty are relevant to NCCL and that it is improper for it to take sides in an industrial dispute' it squandered some of NCCL's strength which now must be recouped.

The tension between individual and collective rights, of which Patricia Hewitt spoke at the AGM, is truly inescapable for NCCL. Anti-racism and a commitment to collective as well as individual rights must inform NCCL's judgment, but neither is an excuse for ducking its central task of assessing situations on their civil liberties merits, taking due account of that tension. Those who would have it pre-judge all issues involving the unions or the National Front, regardless of the civil liberty involved, are tying NCCL's hands for the sake of keeping them clean.

The labour and anti-racist movements do not need NCCL to do their work for them, but to do its own work fearlessly. The point about taking a 'pure' civil liberties line is that this is NCCL's only distinctive and effective contribution. An impartial witness is of more use than one with the declared intention of suppressing some of the evidence. What have we to hide?

The matter is of the most urgent practicality. If NCCL continues to renounce some of its independence in favour of the unions, and to allow that abuse of police power is acceptable if it involves the NF, then those who will suffer most from the surrender of liberty won't be scabs or fascists but those whom NCCL most wishes to defend. Wishing, however, won't do the job. We need to rearm NCCL with the power and ability to do it effectively. By next year I hope no longer to be in the minority at the AGM, not because I crave the support of the Right but because I hope the Left will have stopped running scared.

Children are citizens too

Allan Buckley, Rochdale

As a manager of two Social Services Area Teams during the past ten years, I found Michael Comley's vivid description of his experiences as a social worker and your summary of the ambiguity and confusion about the role of social workers (*NS* 12 April) a welcome change from the characteristic treatment of this subject by the press.

I do wonder if attitudes towards the response of social workers towards injured, neglected, and sexually abused children will change while the public, its political representatives, the judiciary and the press fail to appreciate that if children are citizens, with their own rights, then it is sometimes necessary for the community to find a means of interfering in the family on behalf of the child, and that this process is a complex and skilled one. Part of helping to repair the damage can involve taking steps which offend against our views about the sanctity of the 'natural' family.

Our legal system reflects the confusion over these issues. While parts of it now require that the child's interests should be the paramount consideration in the deliberations of the court, the basic instrument (The Children and Young Persons Act of 1969) is based on a requirement to establish that parents have proved unfit to care for their children, or that children are themselves wrongdoers. The method of jurisdiction is the traditional adversarial method, and the setting is the formal one of the local Magistrates' Court. Surrounding this are a multitude of other statutes relating to the needs of children, many contradictory in their spirit and intent, and introduced in response to public or political feeling at a particular time.

We need a radical change in the law relating to children, with one piece of legislation dealing with all children whatever their difficulties. There should be a family court, whose deliberations would be investigative and informal, and whose paramount consideration would be the interests and needs of the child.

Letters from the coalfields

Barbara Bloomfield, Guy Boanas, Joanna Innes, Bryan Roberts, Raph Samuel, History Workshop Centre, Ruskin College, Oxford

We are compiling a book — to be published in Routledge's 'History Workshop' series — on pit villages during the miners' strike. Particularly valuable, in the material which has come in so far, is correspondence between people in the pit villages and outside supporters. May we appeal, through your columns, for photocopies of any such correspondence, also for strike diaries, local handbills, vouchers, leaflets — anything which could serve to illustrate the village character of the strike. Proceeds from the book will be donated to imprisoned and sacked miners' funds.

In defence of Orange

David Bryce, Secretary, Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland

There is no substance to much of the content of 'when Blue meets Orange' (*NS* 1 February).

The magazine quoted had only one advertisement for an 'Orange Band' but why is this a problem since some of those 'Orange Bands' take part in Glasgow's May Day Parade?

On 14 January Glasgow District Council's Parks & Recreation Committee approved the request for the use of Queen's Park for the Annual Juvenile Demonstration. It was not correct to state that there was 'a near riot by drunken loyalists at last year's rally'. That day, between 15,000 and 20,000 people paraded with three or four times that number of spectators, a few of whom were arrested for anti-social conduct. The number alleged to have signed the petition was 3,000 according to the information from Glasgow District Council on 17 December 1984 and certainly not 8,000.

No 'loyalist' could have attacked 'Republican marches in various parts of Glasgow during 1985 damaging shops and buses' since there have been no Republican marches in Glasgow this year.

ILEA climbs down

Pam Emmerson and Viv Newby, London N16

We would like to bring to the attention of *NS* readers the fact that following your story 'ILEA censures teacher for union activity' (*NS* 26 April) the disciplinary Tribunal mentioned has been 'frozen' and therefore the demo of 13 May at County Hall has been cancelled.

We would like to thank all Labour Party wards and members who passed resolutions demanding that disciplinary actions against teachers for TU activity be dropped and to thank all NUT groups who sent letters of support to Viv Newby, and motions to the Authority condemning the disciplinary action.

The campaign was successful in that disciplinary letters against teachers who took solidarity action for the miners will be removed from their files. The ILEA Labour Group responded to the co-ordinated lobbying by ordinary trade union and Labour Party members, not all of whom were teachers. This grassroots organisation helped ILEA members to focus on their contradictory position as employers vis-a-vis striking trade union teachers.

It is always heartening when elected members are not afraid to listen publicly to those they represent and address themselves to socialist principles even when they cost money and represent a climb down.

Pacific tour for peace

Zohl de Ishtar & Bridget Roberts, c/o Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp

During the month of March two women have shaken up hundreds of people in the British peace movement. Titewhai Harawira from Aotearoa and Chailang Palacios from Micronesia woke up audiences in 12 cities and three peace camps to the deliberate conspiracy of silence surrounding the nuclear exploitation of the Pacific. The message has been that while the western world works to prevent a future nuclear holocaust, people in the Pacific are slowly dying from 40 years of nuclear war. As a result of colonialism, racism and sexism their survival is at stake. The movement for a nuclear-free and independent Pacific is working against time.

As initiators of this tour we want to thank all the women and men who gave money and effort to bring Titewhai and Chailang to this country and to enable them to be heard.

There is a potential danger that when Titewhai and Chailang go home their message could be forgotten. But every group we have visited, and many individuals, have committed themselves to follow-up activities aimed at spreading the information wider, ending the dangerously narrow 'Eurocentricity' and 'whiteness' of much British anti-nuclear campaigning and challenging racism both at home and worldwide.

P.S. We are still raising money for solidarity action and for sending direct to the Pacific. Donations can be sent to the 'Pacific Fund', Newbury Building Society, Bartholomew St, Newbury, Berkshire.

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NO ROOM FOR DEVILS

If you take drugs you must be bad. And if you're bad you must be forced to be good. FRANCIS HOPE, a former drug abuser, criticises the methods of one branch of the rehabilitation business

Henry Iles

THIS COUNTRY is lurching through periodic scares about drug abuse. Customs and Excise Seizure records show that heroin is more widely available than ever before. Smoking heroin, or 'chasing the dragon' in today's romanticised slang, now rivals a night in the pub as an economic proposition for impoverished teenagers. Moreover, Home Office statistics record a four-fold increase in notified addictions in these last five years of economic slump.

While there is not a clear-cut link between drug abuse and social conditions, the phrase 'chasing the dragon' comes from that new and growing constituency of drug takers, the mass of unemployed adolescents. Theirs is a future of jobless incarceration in our proliferating slums. The hard addict of previous decades neatly confirmed our stereotype of his brutal existence in a fittingly nasty vocabulary: 'skag' or 'smack' for the drug, 'fixing' or 'jacking up' for intravenous injection.

The newly romanticised language of our era reveals a change in perspective. Brutal language marked off a world more base than our own; 'chasing the dragon' promises escape from a brutal reality, expressing a vision of a society so much in decline its adventures are chemical. Perhaps this language reveals the nature of the link between an increase in drug abuse and social conditions in a way that statistics cannot.

But I am prompted to write this, at a time when the rehabilitation industry is seeking to expand in response to need, by the observation that many workers in the industry seem to be denying the influence of any socio-economic factors at all. Rather, they treat their clients' problems as wholly individual, the product of strictly personal inadequacies, as though the explosion in drug abuse has been caused by the sudden creation of thousands of disordered personalities.

Now it is, of course, a truism that the abuser will not be helped by having his responsibility for his actions denied him, a denial the abuser can be only too ready to encourage. But the move to an exclusively individualistic interpretation of his problems has deeper and more dangerous implications than that.

If drug abuse can be explained as the manifestation of a personality disorder, attention is diverted away from the problems the abuser has because of, and including, his drug abuse. The rehabilitative task is transformed from one of helping people to overcome their problems to one of pressurising the abusers into radically revising what they are told is their 'disordered personality'.

Putting it simply, I believe there are workers in the rehabilitation industry who are being paid not to help people stop what they are doing, but to stop them being who

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Henry Iles

they are. I do not dispute that many abusers have psychological problems, and that for some people it was these problems that led them to their abuse. But where I object to this 'all in your personality' approach is that it rejects all the accidental, social, cultural, and hedonistic reasons why people use drugs, and in rejecting these rejects much of what abusers have to say about the history of their problems. So whereas many abusers tend to see whatever 'disorders' they may have as the product of their drug taking this thesis demands the opposite: not that abuse damages any underlying normalcy, but that it arises out of a fundamental abnormalcy. Logically, it suggests that drug abusers possess, by definition, a distinct type of disordered personality not found among the population at large.

The prime exponents of the approach go under the name of 'Concept Houses'. One such is the Ley Community, located near Oxford. I was 'successfully rehabilitated' there between the years 1976 and 1978, and from the age of 18 to 20.

Learning to hate oneself

Residential communities of this type are drug free. They demand a removal of the mask created by drug taking in order to expose the 'real', and disturbed, personality. The community then hopes to function as a safe arena for these manifested disturbances to be noted and, via a whole battery of therapeutic techniques, acted on successfully.

Note the logic: for the rehabilitation process to begin, the community must pressure people out of any resistance to the idea that they are deeply disturbed and inadequate. Failure to respond to this pressure becomes a rejection of the rehabilitation process itself. Perhaps the worst bowdlerisation committed by this third-rate and frankly amateurish attempt at psychology is the denial here that all people need some degree of self-esteem and a range of 'resistances' to pressure in order to function as human beings.

When I entered the Ley I was told I was devious, manipulative and untrustworthy, emotionally child-like, and incapable of proper love and affection. We were all told this, for it characterised our 'type'. I had to lower my self-esteem to the point where I could accept myself as a severely inadequate person; it was only by becoming the 'real' and horrible me that I could hope to mature into my true self.

Pursuing this dangerous logic, we all hammered away at ourselves with the desperate frenzy of those who secretly know their projects are flawed but cannot bring themselves to admit it. Given the twin factors of a natural human diversity and the need to deem ourselves inadequate for the sake of survival, all types of behaviour were reduced to simple forms of sin, and then condemned. Assertive people were accused of hiding deep feelings of insecurity behind their extroversion. The shy were forced to become extrovert. It amounted to a campaign to force ourselves into our opposites because, by definition, whatever we had been before was a mark of our flawed personalities.

Stabs were made, of course, at resisting this process, but the resistance was never so great as to prevent very common and traumatic degenerations of people's self-confidence. Moreover, any resistance created a communal hysteria where staff and residents resorted to increasingly hostile measures to force the project through. Heads were shaved, people forced to wear body sized placards proclaiming their sins, the whole community would scrub floors into the small hours of morning, and long periods of indoor confinement, often without singing and, for some people, without talking, were frequent.

It is not surprising that many of us, at least those of us who managed to complete our rehabilitation, were upset to find ourselves more vulnerable and besieged by problems than before — even though we no longer took drugs. Until the Ley had gained sufficient stability following the difficult years of its foundation, and its staff sufficient experience to question these practices, it seemed that no one had stopped to think that our 'rehabilitation' was creating in us just those feelings of inadequacy we had been attributed with. We were the willing victims of a monstrous tautology.

Yet though the Ley has long since revised its methods, other places do not seem to have done so. Whatever changes they have attempted have been superficial, more a matter of reducing the apparent hostility of the measures taken than of junking the ideology underlying their use.

This inertia, I believe, is due to many community staff members being ex-residents themselves. They have had too little positive and adult experience outside their communities. One would think a greater exposure to everyday life would challenge many of their practices. Yet it frequently happens that, on those occasions where society does impinge on the closed world of the community enough to contradict the community ethos, this challenge is taken as a mark of society's inferiority.

So strong is this response that those trainee staff who, with no record of drug abuse in their lives, have to undergo a three month period as a resident, often emerge from this period convinced both of a new-found personal inadequacy and of the community's superior powers to root out forms of behaviour society wrongly tolerates. It's a way of life and of thought that may sound familiar to anyone who's observed the part-religious cults in the USA.

Casting out the devil

Our communities are descendants of a proto-type, called Syanon, created by a group of addicts and alcoholics in the California of 1958. Despite Syanon's eventual decline into a macabre and cult-like organisation, with its charismatic leader, Chuck Dederich, being arrested for attempted murder in 1977, its achievements were thought sufficiently impressive for its methods to be imported here.

Now I have long accepted the cliché that, for better or worse, American culture is marked by a propensity to sharply define contrasts between good and evil. We hear talk of 'free worlds' and 'evil empires', have witnessed the passing of the all-loving Hippies and the all-hating Hell's Angels. And in a climate where people are so

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obviously aligned to the forces of good and evil it is no surprise to find drug abusers calling themselves dope 'fiends', agents of darkness.

Locating the grounds for their abuse in the realm of their evil selves, the people of Syanon sought salvation through the personal and communal exorcism of sin. Techniques of heavy confrontation and confession were developed to drag their recalcitrant devils out, high dividends being promised by the use of these methods, for it follows from a powerful purgation of the bad that a powerful good might emerge.

'Concept Houses' do not, of course, claim to practise the exorcism of sin and the promotion of sanctity. But they owe as much to this form of pseudo-religiosity as to contemporary secular, social, or scientific knowledge. The portrait of the ideal rehabilitee, as an autonomous individual so free of fault he is capable of carving at least some small part of the world into the shape of his dreams, by the power of his own will to succeed strikes me as being itself a portrait of the ideal American citizen. And this ideal is a direct descendant of early American protestantism. The motor force for change here is not any consciously political or social impulse but a harsh moral imperative for individual redemption or success.

The drug rehabilitation industry would benefit from realising just how alien this is to Europeans. The reform-minded abuser does not want to engineer away his personality. He simply wants to stop taking drugs, recognising in himself an underlying normalcy the community ethos cannot admit. And he would like to sustain the fundamental notion of freedom which ideally took him to the community but which is converted there, in a staggering upping of the stakes, into a choice between the beatitude of the redeemed and the evil of the redeemable. Such intense pressures are put upon residents to conform that there are times when the hysterical severity of a community trying to force through salvation resembles the village of Salem at the time of its witch-hunts.

So a significant sector of the British rehabilitation service needs to shed itself of its heritage. It would do well to look to the Ley's example, for its success rate has not only quadrupled since it began its revisions, it has done so in concord with a radical and cost-effective reduction in residents' rehabilitation periods of over 50 per cent.

Until this example is followed I will continue to be almost as worried about *what can be done to* drug abusers in the name of their aid as I am about what they are only too capable of doing to themselves. □

Scapegoat

Francis Wheen

The Airman and the Carpenter: The Lindbergh Case and the Framing of Richard Hauptmann
LUDOVIC KENNEDY *Collins* £12.95

AS WITH THE Kennedy assassination, all Americans who were alive at the time remember where they were when they heard of the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby. Or so Ludovic Kennedy claims, and I'm sure he's right. Half a century later, it's easy to forget just how important the case was: Charles Lindbergh was *the* American hero of the age, and when he gained a rich, intelligent wife and a charming baby boy he became something more, a national emblem. When the baby was kidnapped (and later found dead), the perpetrators of the crime *had* to be found — not simply for the conventional reasons, but also to satisfy the national sense of outrage. To put it bluntly, someone had to fry for it.

The man who did fry was Richard Hauptmann. In this 430-page book Ludovic Kennedy proves beyond doubt that Hauptmann was innocent. That in itself is not a great surprise: even at the time, there were plenty of people — including the governor of New Jersey — who considered that the evidence against Hauptmann was so flimsy as to be see-through, and in the years since then more and more facts have emerged to confirm this belief. Moreover, although Kennedy's book is the most comprehensive demolition of the case against Hauptmann, it is at times windy and repetitive. It could have been cut by at least a quarter without losing any of the crucial details or arguments.

But enough of that. I come to praise Ludovic Kennedy, not to berate him. The great strength of this book — as with Kennedy's other books about miscarriages of justice — is that it shows how easily an innocent person can be found guilty. You might think that after all the celebrated wrongful convictions of our times, from Timothy Evans to Patrick Meehan, this point no longer needed proving. Yet there is still an astonishingly large number of people, particularly in the ruling class, who cannot believe such a thing possible. If Hauptmann (or Evans, or Meehan, or whoever) was innocent, they say, how come he was arrested in the first place? Why did a jury find him guilty, and why did the appeal court uphold that decision?

There are several answers. Hauptmann's main defence counsel was a drunken dud who made a complete hash of the case. The police fabricated evidence. Witnesses were bribed or otherwise persuaded to lie. Press coverage of the case was grossly prejudicial. Poor Hauptmann, a German immigrant whose English was not good, hardly stood a chance.

Perhaps the most interesting question is why so many people joined the conspiracy to frame him. Until Hauptmann was arrested, police inquiries into the kidnapping had been getting nowhere; but, given Lindbergh's standing as a living legend, the case could not be left as just another unsolved mystery. Hauptmann was a convenient scapegoat, all the more symbolically suitable because he was an 'alien'.

It would, however, be wrong to conclude that this was a unique set of circumstances. Many of those involved in framing Hauptmann probably believed that he really was guilty, but that since there was an unfortunate dearth of evidence against him they'd better concoct some. The same has happened in numerous cases since. Ludovic Kennedy argues persuasively that the adversary system of criminal justice — as practised in both Britain and the United States — has failed too often. He suggests the use of an 'examining magistrate', as in France. This may be debatable, but Kennedy has certainly earned the right to have his case heard. If public awareness of the fallibility of our criminal justice system has grown in recent years, that is in no small part thanks to his efforts. □

Popperfoto *The Photo Source*

Richard Hauptmann (left), Charles Lindbergh (right)

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Anti-pill preacher

Joan Smith

The Bitter Pill: How Safe is the 'Perfect Contraceptive'?
ELLEN GRANT *Elm Tree Books* £7.95

IF WE ARE to believe Dr Ellen Grant, the contraceptive pill has some odd side-effects. Mrs E, for instance, took a ride on a bus 'and had to suppress an overwhelming desire to hug and kiss the driver!' — an urge, she told Dr Grant, which was quite out of character. Then there is Mrs N, who 'exploded with anger' after ten months on a certain type of pill and threw a frozen chicken at her husband. Another woman lobbed a large biscuit tin at her unfortunate spouse while taking the same pill.

Dr Grant does not attempt the interesting task of demonstrating causality between these events and the pill. We are denied the evidence to support a link just as much as the evidence against it. (What, I would like to know, had Mrs N's husband been up to in the months before the chicken-throwing incident?) But Dr Grant is not in the business of setting out all the evidence about the pill and letting you decide. Her book is a polemic against it, expressed with all the fervour of the repentant sinner — Dr Grant was one of the first British doctors to conduct trials into the pill in the 1960s but has since turned against it.

As a result, the book is a curious hotch-potch of unsupported allegations about the effects of the pill, scientific evidence that favours one side of the argument and covert moralising. In case you think I exaggerate, here is an example of the tone of the book:

> There have been many socially disastrous trends since the beginning of the sixties. It was claimed to be the decade when freedom of expression came to all classes, and no doubt the pill was seen as furthering this noble concept. While many other social factors are involved in assessing this important era, I would boldly draw some links between the mass use of steroid hormones and the social catastrophes of today.

Among the 'social catastrophes' which Dr Grant connects with taking the pill are divorce, suicide and child battering. The evidence is usually scanty, anecdotal (Mrs E and her bus driver, for instance) and open to more than one interpretation.

A higher divorce rate among pill users in one of the studies quoted in the book could just as easily be related to the social class or economic circumstances of the women concerned as to their use of the pill, to take just one possible example.

Dr Grant dismisses evidence from scientific studies which appear to show beneficial side-effects from the pill — two British studies which suggest a lower overall mortality rate among pill users, for instance. At the same time, she overstates the significance of the pill as the cause of cancer of the cervix.

Her statement that 'recent figures clearly show that the most important cause of this epidemic in the young is taking the pill' is very controversial indeed, given that the foremost researchers in the field link the epidemic not with the pill but with a sexually transmitted disease.

In another part of the book, Dr Grant makes a link between the pill and illness in a way that is not just contentious but downright mischievous. An organisation called the Pill Victims Group got over 700 letters from women or their husbands after publicity about their campaign in newspapers, she says. 'Some women needed amputations', she carries on blithely. There is no attempt to say what was amputated, or how these amputations were linked with the pill. This is not rational argument, it is scare-mongering.

There is a crying need for a cool appraisal of the effects of the pill which would help women to decide *for themselves* whether the risks of taking the pill outweigh its advantages as a form of contraception. It may well be that if women were given such a book, the majority would turn against it. But at least they would be doing so for the right reasons.

Because this book appears to be arguing against the opinions of the medical establishment and makes passing reference to feminism, it would be easy to fall into the trap of seeing it as a tool in the liberation of women from the autocratic power of medicine. It is not. It is just as manipulative and patronising to women as any other book which rests on the notion that doctor, in this case Dr Ellen Grant, knows best. □

War and peace

Bob Woffinden

1945: The World We Fought For
ROBERT KEE *Hamish Hamilton* £12.95
Prospect & Reality: Great Britain 1945-55
T.E.B. HOWARTH *Collins* £14.95

AFTER THE PUBLICATION of his book about 1939 — *The World We Left Behind* — Robert Kee was damned by A.J.P. Taylor in an *Observer* review as a 'mere chronicler'. Undaunted, he has now produced the companion volume about 1945, using precisely the same method. He has reconstructed the unfolding of the events of the year entirely from contemporary sources (newspaper and radio reports) and has sedulously denied himself the luxury of hindsight.

While one can understand why professional historians do find the approach infuriating, Kee's sources are sufficiently wide-ranging (his material has been gleaned from British, French and American daily and weekly periodicals, the *New Statesman* included) and his narrative touch so sure that the exercise is wholly worthwhile.

On one level, there is a simple fascination in seeing whose judgments have been vindicated and whose discredited. (A good rule of thumb seems to be: whoever got it right, *The Times* got

Alison Stone

Tribute to a star

Wendy dances spraying shaving cream and dirt
And stamps her foot, desires thwarted
By a drum that will not break.

Thrusting on the floor
She works up a hunger
Only geraniums and worship can abate.
Her grunting brings a shower of torn petals.
Grinning, she attaches clothespins to her chest.

It's a sledgehammer she services
When the mike has had its turn.
Flower pots pay for their voyeurism —
The sentence: death by demolition.
'Are you having a good time tonight?
It's a line they draw.

Saying don't step over it. I'll start
A school for boys and girls.
Get down on your knees and worship.'

The car roof has leapt to greet the ceiling
A guitar has been devoured
By the chainsaw's teeth. The tv's smashed to bits.
'It's the cosmetic companies, y'know.
Somebody's got to do it. I mean, the government
Subsidises *sugar*! There's so much
Violence in society.'

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it wrong. What spineless editorials! Kee refers to 'the masterly shiftiness with which [the paper] combined democratic rectitude with appeasement of authoritarian regimes'.) Awful historical ironies, too, emerged from the pile of newsprint Kee must have conned. After intensive Allied bombing of German cities at the beginning of February, the *New York Times* reported that 'among those cities spared, Dresden is number one'.

More importantly, the approach is instructive because it affords an insight into how the terrible events of that year — the opening-up of the concentration camps, the use of the atom bomb — were received at the time, by a world which had only an inadequate appreciation of their full horror and which in any case was inured by six years of slaughter to what the publisher Victor Gollancz called 'further debasement of the human currency'.

Because the book fills in the background against which political decisions were taken, statesmen might be expected to emerge in a more sympathetic light. Not at all; if anything, their casuistry is even more telling. Allied politicians were only too eager to pretend that Yalta was not a betrayal of the very issue which had precipitated the war: the sovereignty of Poland. As Kee points out, Poland was now being partitioned by its allies rather than its enemies.

The resolution of the war was obviously the surface story of 1945. The underlying theme was the gestation of the mutual mistrust between Russia and Britain and America, which was the foremost factor in the shaping of the post-war world. Kee deals properly with both, just as he also maintains an equilibrium between global and individual tragedies. Among the latter, there is the sad tale of the air-ace who was killed on VJ Day by a firework he'd made himself.

Published to coincide with the 40th anniversary of VE Day, *The World We Fought For*, like its predecessor, is exhaustive and illuminating. In comparison with *The World We Left Behind*, it is not quite as lavishly produced, although the maps are a vast improvement. Strictly speaking, Kee does not cover the entire 12 months, but only the eight of wartime. He can be forgiven the lacuna. Once again he's had an abundance of material and once again, mere chronicler though he is, he's done it expertly.

There is just one further point, which concerns intransitive verbs and the grammatical violence that has lately been done to them. In America, they have been forcibly recast in a transitive state (as in, say, 'McEnroe protested the call'); over here, there is a growing tendency to join them in a shotgun marriage with their accompanying prepositions. This book is littered with such inelegant miscegenations: 'to mop-up', 'he came-to', 'was fixing-up', etc., etc. Kee's previous book (published by Weidenfeld) was not similarly affected, so the fault must lie with the editors at Hamish Hamilton.

I am indebted to T.E.B. Howarth for the interesting information that Clement Attlee described left-wing elements in society as 'the enemy within'; and that Winston Churchill called the prevention of mass unemployment 'the most solid duty of government'. Overall, though, *Prospect & Reality* is a pedantic exercise in union-bashing. I relished the personal reminiscences of life in Forties Britain (wartime bread was 'particularly valuable for what was known as filling corners in hungry children'); but I'm puzzled that an author who seems to have lifted much of the social background for his book from such an impeccable source as Christopher Driver's *The British at Table* should have lifted his politics from the *Daily Telegraph*. □

FICTION

Chewed to a rag

Marion Glastonbury

The stillness the dancing
WENDY PERRIAM *Michael Joseph* £9.95
Cranes at Dusk
HISAKO MATSUBARA *Secker* £9.95
Dancing with Mermaids
MILES GIBSON *Heinemann* £8.95
Miss Peabody's Inheritance
ELIZABETH JOLLEY *Viking* £7.95
Mr Scobie's Riddle
ELIZABETH JOLLEY *Penguin* £2.95

'SO THE DARKNESS shall be the light and the stillness the dancing.' 'East Coker' supplies the title of Wendy Perriam's panoramic novel, and T. S. Eliot's antitheses underlie the paradoxical progress of her characters as they proceed with deliberate speed and cautious daring, looking before and after they leap. Never an impulse without a misgiving, never a meeting without a qualm, never a step forward without a pause for introspection. . .

Middle-class women of three generations, Bea (69), Morna (41) and Chris (17) have been raised in the belief that what goes against the grain is good for the soul. Fond and guilt-ridden, they weigh duty against desire, seeking self-knowledge and a sense of belonging by wrestling with the strange and sampling the uncongenial. Home is reached by alien paths. Bea, the war widow, survives a crisis of religious doubt and learns to accept the plebeian youth who is to marry her granddaughter. Morna, the translator, finds relief from the pangs of a convent girlhood and the bruises of divorce in the arms of a hagiographer. Chris, the student, welcomed to California by her long lost father and his new family, embarks on a sunlit spree of sensuous indulgence which enables her to distinguish truth from illusion.

These revelations occur in contrasting locales which have been scrupulously documented. 'Honey,' cries a Los Angeles neighbour, 'are you sure you love yourself enough?. . . You won the sperm race, didn't you? We all did.' Rides in Disneyland, exhortations from Reverend Mother, the flora of the Hebrides, the fleshpots of Weybridge: all are solidly, boldly conveyed. So are numerous sexual encounters, though it must be admitted that fiascos with philistine Neil carry more conviction that bliss with ascetic David. The scope of the novel and

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the gravity of the author's intention can be seen in the tragic denouement. Yet it's difficult to take the central sensibilities seriously, as they chew minutely on every mouthful of consciousness and recoil with wounded good taste from every glimpse of Crimplene.

Cranes at Dusk is also informative and, in parts, saddening, with the bitterest blow to the fictional family kept to the end. Hisako Matsubara was born and educated in Japan but lives in Cologne and writes in German, so her account of Kyoto in 1945 is directed at Western readers, who are rightly assumed to need explanations of mores and attitudes before and after national defeat. Horrifying rumours from Hiroshima and Nagasaki reach the bereaved inhabitants of the silk weavers' quarter. When the Emperor's unprecedented radio broadcast is announced, famished civilians sharpen bamboo staves, expecting to be called upon to fight to the death, only to be stunned by news of capitulation. General MacArthur lands at Tokyo airport, with an insulting lack of military pomp, and, by degrees, the 'hairy monsters' of the American Occupation become 'honoured victors', a source of chewing gum and chocolate, and a threat to the reputation of local girls.

At school, ten-year-old Saya notes the official repudiation of Shinto, the faith her father serves as a priest, and is herself drawn to the Christian church, by curiosity, the chance of English lessons and the prospect of some respite from traditional subordination. 'A girl who gets beaten [by boys] is never quite blameless.' The old order is represented by her mother, a perfectionist devotee of *ikebana* and the tea ceremony, who has been trained, like *bonsai*, with authoritarian rigour and bewails the heretical open-mindedness of her enlightened husband. Indeed, the Guji is so noble and his wife so neurotic, and the depiction of Saya's friends and enemies so partisan from first to last, that the narrative has the psychological simplicity and single vision of a children's story, albeit an exceptionally sensitive and well-written one.

In place of the usual photograph of the author's head and shoulders, a solemn, fair-haired innocent aged about nine dangles bare knees on the cover of **Dancing with Mermaids**. Inside, Miles Gibson, a poet and enfant terrible approaching 40, offers a whimsical chronicle of legendary Rams Horn, a picturesque village combining features of Toytown, Llareggub and literary Dorset. The sea 'gropes for the shore and sucks at the shingle' and, in every corner of poppy-bright fields or chintz-covered parlours, various no-good boyos are up to mischief. However, it is easier to populate Whelk Pier with a comic cast of fishwives, urchins and tradesmen — butcher, publican, doctor, herbalist, clairvoyant and light-house keeper — than to devise amorous postures and permutations to put them in. Erotic invention, soon exhausted, falls back on the queasy titillation of an idiot nymphet, a bewhiskered crone and 'a naked nigger with blowtorch breath'.

Elizabeth Jolley is noted in Australia for lyrical fantasy, formal originality and roguish hints at secret vice where one might least expect it: amid the dignity and decorum of elderly ladies in the caring professions. In **Miss Peabody's Inheritance**, the majestic headmistress of 'Pine Heights' takes a favoured pupil on a torrid tour of Europe, avidly pursued in the imagination of a London spinster, the office dogsbody, who manages to turn escapist literature into a real escape. In **Mr Scobie's Riddle**, the captive inmate of a geriatric nursing home seeks refuge from the mayhem caused by greed, jealousy and blackmail, in nostalgic reverie, Bible readings and cassettes of Mozart. Mildly nasty, affording only a rare twinge of wry amusement, these books illustrate the idea that farce may be a form of tragedy speeded up, or alternatively, by repetition and inertia, slowed down and drawn out. □

Ill wind

Jonathan Mirsky

Agriculture in China's Modern Economic Development
NICHOLAS R. LARDY *Cambridge* £22.50
Food Grain Procurement and Consumption in China
KENNETH R. WALKER *Cambridge* £25

FOREIGN TRAVELLERS to China nowadays are struck by the upsurge and variety of free rural markets, featuring crabs, fish, fruit, tobacco and cotton, which, they are assured by their guides, are making peasants rich. What the trippers are not told is that, far from being the mysterious emergence of the latent entrepreneurialism lurking in every Chinese, the great diversity is a revival of traditional trading patterns disrupted by the Maoists on ideological and strategic grounds. With the eradication of the markets and their hodge-podge of commodities came hunger and famine.

Indeed, the last remaining myth of the Maoist decades, now that sensitive attention to the environment, the equality of women and no crime have been disposed of, is that the Chairman fed the masses.

> People who are not acquainted with trends in the Chinese economy find it almost impossible to believe what the official statistics show — that average grain output per head in 1978 was, at best, only 6% above its 1936 level...Between 1955-57 and 1978-80, grain production per head declined in eleven of China's 27 provinces...and this group had a total population of 225 million or 23% of the 1978-80 total,

says Kenneth Walker, Professor of Chinese Economics at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

Walker is a meticulous scholar with a somewhat cumbersome style. Almost rivalling him in a near obsessive combing out of Chinese statistics is the University of Washington's Nicholas Lardy, who writes in a livelier way:

> In retrospect many of the policies pursued by the Party after 1949 appear to have fundamentally undervalued agriculture and have left a large share of China's rural population enmeshed in extreme poverty even today.

These dismal conclusions can now be quantified. In an attempt to undermine nearly the entire Maoist epoch, Peking is releasing an avalanche of statistics and information, into which China specialists are digging. The period 1955 to 1978, two years after Mao's death, is now dismissed, by the Party, as one of 'tragic errors' and 'catastrophes'.

The new documentation reveals that even those who are now furthering the get-rich-quick policies associated with Deng Xiaoping cannot escape the tar from their own brush: Deng himself is on record as having supported the very policies he now deplores, policies which led to millions dead of hunger and the stunting of rural children — at eight times the rate of their urban counterparts. As Lardy observes, it is one of the many paradoxes of Mao's rule that, although he professed particular affection for the peasantry, they suffered particularly at his hands.

The very worst catastrophe of the Mao epoch was the 1959-61 famine when, as Lardy and Walker show, the death rate escalated from 11 to 17 per thousand. 'Not a few people died,' admitted a Chinese spokesman quoted by Walker, who also draws from contemporary documents which complain that 'at present what the peasants eat in the villages is even worse than what dogs ate in the past'. Mao's own home province was said to be enveloped in 'total darkness'. Lardy takes a stab at total dead and, after discussing alternatives running as high as 28 milion, settles for 16 million, which is now the accepted Chinese estimate.

The shortages and faulty distribution which provoked this calamity, known in China as 'the three terrible years' and until recently attributed there to a malign combination of bad weather, reckless reporting and Soviet duplicity, arose, as Lardy and Walker demonstrate, from Mao's determination to make each province of China self-sufficient in grain, so that attacks from the super-powers would not collapse the entire economy. Mao concurrently believed that a market-oriented economy, in which localities made the most of their comparative advantages in environment and skills, would never rid itself of selfishness and exploitation. The Great Helmsman therefore directed that areas which for centuries had become relatively prosperous by exchanging silk, cotton, tobacco or soy beans for other regions' grain should now grow grain themselves, regardless of conditions. The prime example was Tibet, which in fact had grown barley, a hardy crop at high altitudes, and was now ordered to grow wheat; the already marginal economy nose-dived as the wheat inevitably failed to thrive, and Tibetans starved.

Since at least the 17th century, as Lardy describes, the lower Yangtze region had become a rice-deficient area as peasants turned their attention to mulberry leaves for silk worms, or cotton, and bought rice shipped south by sea and canal. By the early Thirties these farmers were taking in 2,000 to 2,100 calories daily, a quantity not reached again until 1957 after which it declined for the next 20 years sometimes to 1,200 and 1,400 calories, as peasants struggled to cultivate grain in unsuitable conditions.

Lardy says that, in 30 north China counties, per capita food consumption in the early

Cont'd on p.28

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Shorter reviews

Cinema and State — The Film Industry and the British Government 1927-84
MARGARET DICKINSON and SARAH STREET
BFI £18 & £8.95

Here we are in British Film Year 1985 — and to all intents and purposes it's back to square one. After 60 years of struggle, the rug has been slipped from under the British Film Industry's feet by the cancellation of almost every hard-fought-for form of protection or subsidy. 'Let market forces prevail' is the order of the Thatcherite day.

Yet, as Margaret Dickinson and Sarah Street explain in their comprehensive and very detailed study, it is precisely because British cinema has a built-in disadvantage in the face of over-bearing American market forces that successive governments since 1927 have been pushed and pummelled into various enactments aimed at giving it a bit of living space. The book tells a sad and sorry tale of half-measures, inadequacies and compromises, with virtually every protection scheme eventually manipulated by Hollywood for its own ends.

In each decade a handful of directors and producers and a few politicians — together with the cine technicians' union, once it had gathered strength — have worked for the perspective of a British film industry, culturally and financially freed from Hollywoodisation. Substantial long-term schemes have been submitted to successive governments only to be watered down and marginalised by the main commercial forces within the industry, whose interests were inextricably tied up with American finance.

Much of this has been chronicled before. One of the many qualities of the new study is that it sets the particular problems of the film industry (treated from the start as a manufacturing industry under license from the Board or Department of Trade) in the wider context of big business imports and exports. The authors' research into public records shows that pressures on the government to limit protection measures haven't come only from American interests within the British film industry, but from America itself, at the highest diplomatic levels. So much for 'free market forces'.

It's amazing how often British cinema has sprung back to life in face of these formidable odds. *Cinema and State* is an invaluable source of information and explanation for everyone concerned with ensuring that the government's latest round of cuts and privatisations doesn't finally kill it off.

Nina Hibbin

Nice Promises: Tim Sebastian in Poland
Chatto £9.95 & £4.95

Now based in Moscow as BBC TV's correspondent, Tim Sebastian worked from Warsaw from 1979 until long after martial law, covering events there primarily for BBC Radio. This book is an exceptionally disappointing collection of his personal impressions during his years in Poland. Maybe Tim Sebastian has been too long in television, where his ability to convey authority, sincerity and drama in two-minute slots is undoubted, but where snapshot impressions are pretty much all that anyone can hope to offer.

Anyone new to Polish affairs will be confused by the sketchiness of the impressions and the informed will be particularly annoyed by the abundance of factual errors, notably when it comes to names. One example will suffice. The notorious head of Polish TV, Maciej Szczepanski, who during 1981 was exposed as the ringleader of huge rackets, is referred to as 'Jan Szczepanski'.

Errors of fact are obvious. More worrying are the ways the book sours the whole of the period with snide references to Solidarity and some of its leadership. One passage, concerning Jacek Kuron, founder member of KOR, stands out. Sebastian evidently did not get on well with Kuron, who certainly is not an easy person to deal with. But the leaders of Poland's heterogeneous opposition were often understandably impatient with Western journalists who, by and large, saw Poland as just another assignment on the way to greater and more lucrative ventures. Sebastian condemns Kuron for not being one of the opposition's 'realists'. Yet he must surely know that if realism were the guiding force, Solidarity would still be a figment of the imagination. It was the imagination of people such as Kuron that achieved the impossible and might still one day bring it off.

We have virtually no indication of what must have been one of the most fascinating aspects of Sebastian's time in Poland, his relationship (as a journalist working for a most prestigious organisation) with the rest of the media entourage and with those vital but eternally anonymous mentors, diplomatic staff of Western embassies. As it is, there are many other books on recent Polish events that should be turned to first, second and third.

Gary Mead

The Information Technology Revolution
ed. TOM FORESTER *Basil Blackwell*
£27.50 & £9.95

Multi-author books are often only books at all in the sense that they are set in type, between hard covers, and are fatter than journals. *The Information Technology Revolution* looks suspiciously like such a non-book, consisting of 48 articles culled from magazines like *Business Week*, *Science* and *Scientific American* (33 of the articles are American).

Still, it's a big book and it works over most of the information technology topics currently in the air: artificial intelligence, viewdata, home shopping, the social implications of all these. There's plenty of ludicrous utopianism, especially from Japan: 'The spirit of the information society will be the *spirit of globalism*, a symbiosis in which man and nature can live together in harmony, consisting ethically of *strict self-discipline and social contribution*.' This is balanced by the Dr Strangeloves of the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA): 'this [intelligent unmanned missiles] is a very sexy area to the military'.

The editor's main contribution has been to bring opposing views between the same covers. The most interesting is Joe Weizenbaum's 'The Myths of Artificial Intelligence', an attack on *The Fifth Generation* by Edward Feigenbaum, an extract from which is also included. Feigenbaum is an enthusiast for geriatric robots, the information age's answer to the granny problem: 'the very best thing about a geriatric robot is that it *listens*'.

Judged on its information content, this book is hardly worth the cover price. There is much talk of Japanese and American programmes to build fifth generation (intelligent) computers, but the UK's Alvey Programme is covered by a few bibliographical references, and is not indexed. I wonder what sort of information-processing system the editor used to compile the book?

Peter Forbes

VERSO MAY TITLES

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VERSO

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Seventies sank lower than the levels of the earl Thirties. In southwestern Guizhou provinc alone 14 million peasants existed at this standard. In 24 poor Shandong counties, which 22 years before had reached a relatively high standard by growing cotton, 20 million people sank into poverty when it was decreed that they must sow grain in unreceptive soil. By 1957, according to Lardy, they were reduced 'to abject poverty'. Similar policies applied in the north west, where oil seed, forestry and animal husbandry were reduced in favour of grain. But felling trees and ploughing up pastures created erosion. In a rain-short region, with their draft animals gone and paltry grain harvests, peasants went desperately hungry for years. Walker's grain production figures are frightening. Lardy says 'poverty in the late 1970s was widespread in some regions that historically had enjoyed a comparative advantage in cultivation of non-grain crops or derived a larger-than-average share of their income from animal husbandry'. In Tibet, it was only four years ago that peasants were finally permitted to return to pastoral pursuits, the regional alternative to barley cultivation which has also re-emerged.

It is a mark of the demented Maoist policies that not only were desperate peasants compelled to furnish a considerable portion of their meagre crops as tax to the State, they were forced *to buy back grain at high prices* to feed themselves; Lardy estimates that the official Chinese figure of 90 million peasants caught in such a vice is far too low.

Mao believed that small-unit farming and free markets would revive exploitation and wealth distinctions. Since their reintroduction in 1979, this is already the case. But production has also sky-rocketed. Peasants don't know where to store their grain harvests although the area sown to grain is rapidly declining as the commodity farmers return to their old pursuits. Even a firm advocate of collective farming like the American William Hinton, who deplores the new individualism, admits 'you can't argue with success'.

Lardy dismisses current Chinese attempts to blame 20 years of malnutrition and famine on Mao and a handful of 'Leftists'. Everything was debated at the highest levels of the Party, he asserts, and 'reflects a consensual process, not the dictates of one man or a small group' — although a few brave top leaders such as Marshal Peng Dehuai saw the looming famine in 1959 and, after warning Mao, found himself under virtual house arrest. The root cause, for Lardy and Walker, was the government's decision to collectivise and centrally direct production, which Lardy says 'provided unparalleled opportunities for Party intervention in decision-making'. These two masterful studies lay out the dreadful consequences of those decisions.

By 1959, with the communes fully established, Party General Secretary (as he then was) Deng Xiaoping said they had already 'played a great part in developing the rural economy and culture and in raising the living standards of the peasants'. Within two years at least 16 million peasants died of hunger in disasters, Deng and his protégés now concede, arising from a 'Communist wind' they themselves once helped to fan. □

FILMS

Going by the book

John Coleman

Hanna Schygulla's best moment as rule-breaking Paulina

A Love in Germany (15)
Camden Plaza; Chelsea Cinema
Starman (PG)
Leicester Square Theatre
The Bay Boy (15)
Classics, Haymarket and Chelsea; Odeon, Kensington

FORTY YEARS ON, as Reagan discovered over his visit to Bitburg military cemetery, some dead are still not allowed to lie down. Andrzej Wajda's magnificent trilogy of the Polish Resistance (*A Generation, Kanal, Ashes and Diamonds*), with which he made his astonishing debut as a director, has mostly passed through in a current NFT season, 'The War in Europe', running till 28 May — *Ashes and Diamonds* may be caught this coming Sunday. But, as Wajda himself has pointed out, 'in the great majority of films shot in countries . . . occupied by the Germans during World War II, the characters are portrayed either as moving targets or as vampire-like monsters'. He wanted to get in closer to the old enemy, to ask some domestic questions and tell some home-truths about the phenomenon of Nazism in action, and a novel by Rolf Hochhuth, the controversial author of such plays as *The Representative* and *Soldiers*, may well have seemed made to measure. In it Hochhuth told the true story of an affair between a German married woman and a Polish POW back in 1941, and of its doomed outcome; went back to the actual village of Brombach near the Swiss border, to record today's reactions to the event; reflected on past history and on such figures in its landscape as Goebbels, Goering and Churchill; and, perhaps most tellingly, reprinted some extraordinary documents of the period.

Wajda's **A Love in Germany** keeps Hochhuth's title and tale but drops the meditations. It is a strange, wilful, vindictive and erratic film, veering between uneasy compassion, hot-house melodrama, near-hysteria and stunning sequences of betrayal and black comedy. A Narrator, returning to Brombach with his teenage son, both brackets the occasion, speaking to camera from a train at the start, from behind a desk littered with mementoes at the end, and is seamlessly introduced three or four times in the body of the work, talking to tight-lipped 'survivors'. He turns out to be the adult version of a chubby, seven-year-old lad seen sucking a swastika lollipop on the counter of a greengrocery shop as the story proper begins. Guilty Paulina (Hanna Schygulla), the proprietor with a

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husband away guarding POWs in Bavaria, was his mother. This held-back irony, if irony it is, falls oddly flat, as does the Narrator's closing admission: 'I doubt if it is possible to describe it as it really was.' Was *his* journey into the past, then, really necessary? (Its principal function would seem to be blackly admonitory. 'The past must be buried for ever,' declares one girl; an old man barks, 'They should both have been hanged'; an invalid old woman croaks, 'No use going to Brombach — they're all Nazis there'. No spirit of forgiveness or reconciliation here.)

And yet Wajda's wonderfully reconstructed 1941 'Brombach' — another nearby village stood in — is less black and white than expected, not merely in the idyllic colours of countryside that romantically cocoon Paulina's love-making with the Pole, Stani (fetching young Piotr Lysak), but morally, too. Schygulla is not asked to do much more than move around in a haze of dazed lust, her *amour* so *fou* in the prevailing war-time climate that it tips into the ridiculous, most notably when she concludes her list of purchases at the local chemist's with a request for condoms, and this under the assembled gazes of two girls, a soldier and a stunned older woman. The episode is almost surreal in its bold blindness; and Schygulla has her best moment just after, shaking her head resolutely before mounting her bike as if to clear her skull of the lunacy. And it may well be that Wajda's most impressive achievement in this patchy enterprise (from one's insular fastness one has always to bear in mind it is made by a Pole for Poles, with a bit-part even, overplayed, by idolised Daniel Olbrychski) is to fuse notions of a Theatre of Cruelty with those of a Theatre of the Absurd.

For the village's SS officer Mayer (Armin Mueller-Stahl) has the crucial and most shaded role. The women in general come off as compliantly patriotic, and aggressive with it: Paulina's best friend loses her man in battle and furiously resents the illegal passion; another woman schemes to betray Paulina, one eye on acquiring her shop; while the farmer employing Stani robustly declares, 'When night comes, to hell with the Party', his wife refuses to let their POW eat with them, citing orders from on high. And it is some of the craziest of these rules and regulations (the original documents themselves briefly screened) which bedevil the not-so-nasty Mayer when he is forced to arrest Paulina and Stani: the comprehensive insanity that led to the evil of the camps, 'just following orders', is here caught at its small and poisonous grass-roots, as tragi-comic nonsenses.

Mayer and his baffled henchman try to 'Germanise' the Pole, a permitted ploy, to help exculpate Paulina, whose husband is — after all — a soldier bound for the Eastern front. Stani meekly submits to measurements of height, comparison of eye-colour from a wicked-looking little case of tinted false eyes, the same for hair from a tuft of assorted hues, further muddled experiments, before stoutly declaring he won't become Aryan. Mayer's 'If we're the master race, then it's idiotic not to belong' cuts no ice. And what we are most likely to carry away from his ultimate hanging is the memory of three cigarettes, the laid-down price for getting a fellow-countryman to do the deed. That the Olbrychski-character refuses to perform and Mayer has impatiently to break the rules and do it himself comes across as much as a breach of protocol as a brutal act. Here, and elsewhere, Wajda has his finger superbly on the pulse of bad times. Horror starts little.

John Carpenter's **Starman** has an alien accepting the invitation extended by Voyager II to visit Earth, assuming the form of a dead human and becoming emotionally entangled with the fellow's widow during an escape from NSA agents. A few conventional special effects (space-ware, nude baby being stretchingly transformed into nude man) give pleasant way to the unconventional special effectiveness of Jeff Bridges and Karen Allen as the odd couple, with some comedy relieving the message about our savage backwardness. Daniel Petrie's **The Bay Boy** has the Canadian-born director returning to his youth and memories of an agitated year, 1937, in a coastal Nova Scotia mining township, with Donald Sutherland's eerily spitting image and son Kiefer as the 16-year-old rather passively witnessing a double murder, having a pass made by a priest and losing his virginity to a likely lass. Liv Ullman keeps brushing back of hand against her brow as overworked, religious mama. Respectable, nice, well made and played, not very interesting. □

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

Amadeus Peter Shaffer's rich, vulgar and potent fantasy about mediocrity's revenge on genius, sumptuously directed by Milos Forman, with F. Murray Abraham outstanding as Salieri and Mozart's music cascading from the screen.

A Private Function Blissful and British double first as Michael Mowbray steers top-notch cast through puncturingly word-perfect Alan Bennett comedy set in 1947 Yorkshire. Nagged by social-climbing wife, meek chiropodist gets revenge on local unworthies by stealing black-market pig. (Maggie Smith, Michael Palin).

Favourites of the Moon Summary-defying, hypnotic entertainment from Georgian director Otar Yosseliani, making his fifth film during stay in a Paris he packs with pass-the-parcel thieves, tramps, whores, mistresses, anarchists and *flics*.

Beverly Hills Cop Brilliant young Eddie Murphy (*48 HRS, Trading Places*) hoists workaday hunt-the-cocaine thriller into compulsive viewing.

THEATRE

Rough beasts

Benedict Nightingale

Richard III
SHAKESPEARE *Barbican*
Pravda
DAVID HARE and HOWARD BRENTON *Olivier*

BOAR, HELL-HOUND, bottled spider, hedgehog, poisonous bunch-backed toad? Shakespeare ransacked the bestiary for images that would adequately evoke Richard III; but none seems quite to catch the physical quintessence of the character in its latest incarnation, still less that of the other power-mad monster that, as chance would have it, charismatically slouched on to a British stage last week. At the Barbican, Antony Sher brings bizarre new twists both to Crookback's spine and to his personality. He crosses psychotic polio sufferer with praying mantis to produce what might tentatively be categorised as a preying mantis, a creature that slithers and swivels and hops, using its long black crutches now as vaulting poles, now as weapons to prod or thwack, now as legs with which to seize his transfixed victims by the throat. At the National, Anthony Hopkins lumbers craning and blinking and dangerously grinning into the light, his yellow-leather face and slightly bent back adding to the impression that mammalian DNA has been blended with reptilian, and what we have here is a killer-turtle adapted equally to the Cretaceous period and our own. He is a newspaper magnate from the southern hemisphere named Rup — sorry, Lambert le Roux.

I haven't had such shivers since a smiling Mongolian introduced me to the creepy-crawlies they keep in the natural history museum in Ulan Bator; and the similarities between Shakespeare's 15th-century Belial and Hare-Brenton's 20th-century Moloch don't end there. **Richard III** was late-Tudor propaganda, an attempt to win hearts and minds by travestying the usurper the then monarch's grandfather had overthrown. **Pravda** is an example of the same rough genre, if one most of us would agree to be more

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worthily motivated. It uses frank and unabashed caricature to didactic ends: which are to suggest not merely that we're giving outrageously unfit people far too much control over what ought to be sources of truth and light, but that the British character of 1985, compounded as it substantially is of greed, cynicism, sloth and moral gutlessness, makes more than one aspect of our national life vulnerable to unscrupulous predators. 'Fleet Street is only a metaphor,' say Hare-Brenton in the Olivier programme, and mean it.

There's a place for all that; but it needs to be pointed out what the play isn't as well as what it refreshingly and ambitiously is. Those in search of documentary authority would have done much better to see Stephen Wakelam's recent *Deadlines*, which showed the intricate agonies of a suicide case being assiduously rendered bland and glib by radio and TV. There's a potentially good scene in *Pravda* in which a news editor deguts a story about peace-camp women being seriously injured by marauding police; but the way it's originally written is professionally so inept, and the way it's revised so guileless, that the incident is scarcely credible. More importantly for the plot, it's difficult to credit the extreme ease with which the South African le Roux buys the upscale voice of the British establishment, the *Victory*, and is then accepted by the trustees supposed to safeguard its integrity. I sometimes wondered if Hare-Brenton know very much about journalism. There were also times when it struck me as ironical that a play accusing the British press of having rather less respect for objective fact than its Soviet counterparts should itself succumb to simplification, exaggeration and distortion.

Still, Hare-Brenton have pre-empted such objections by adopting the sort of style reviewers can (and have) gratefully described as 'Jonsonian'. Indeed, they themselves disarmingly dub the play a 'comedy of excess'. That presumably excuses their indiscriminate scorn for every kind and variety of journalist, down to the critic lying dead drunk beneath the news editor's desk after a visit to a lunchtime theatre. That explains why pretty well the only distinction they finally see between those writing for the *Victory* and the *Tide*, or (let's say) *The Times* and the *Sun*, is that the former are more boring, the latter rather more open and honest in their manipulations. That justifies the presence on the cast list of such names as Ian Ape-Warden, Cliveden Whicker-Baskett and, above all, Elliot Fruit-Norton, the wincingly precious mandarin who is fired as editor of the *Victory* and ends up creating 'centres of canine excellence' as chairman of the National Greyhound Racetrack Inspection Board. Part of the fun consists, of course, in identifying such flimsily camouflaged character.

But both the fun and the parallel-spotting are also meant to be serious, and that can cause problems, for instance when Hare-Brenton launch into what eventually becomes an imaginative rerun of the Sarah Tisdall case. On comes the young opportunist le Roux has appointed to the helm of the *Victory*, clutching the 'golden finger' he's just won as Editor of the Year, to find his wife offering him a document that proves that the Minister of Defence has been lying about the safety of plutonium canisters. At this point the mood becomes earnest, the acting disconcertingly shrill. 'Scrap the feature pages, front page lead story, hold the presses,' unoriginally yelps the excited hack, for once more aware of public responsibility than private career, and is instantaneously sacked by the proprietor for his display of liberal independence. The implausibility of all this might not matter if the tone were still unequivocally that of a scathing cartoon; but it isn't, and isn't at several other times either. In fact, things get distinctly awkward whenever Hare-Brenton bring on that selfsame editor's wife, since her task is plonkingly and redundantly to tell us what we should be thinking. 'Fight him with ideas,' she primly advises as her husband joins with the fastidiously vindictive Fruit-Norton to revenge himself on the malignant le Roux. How much better, how very much better simply to have shown the piranhas snapping at the great white shark in those polluted waters — and trusted us to know that the battle wasn't exactly moral or rational.

Hare-Brenton sometimes seem a bit patronising to their audiences and, indeed, to the British public itself. In their gaudy world even upmarket newspapers succeed only if they emphasise sex, scandal, crime and sport, sport, sport. Yet let me not carp and cavil, because most of *Pravda* is still marvellously enjoyable, packed as it is both with gleeful scurrility and with a lively lay concern about the many and obvious limitations of Grub Street. Why, they ask, so toothless a press council? Why the perilous clubbiness of the Lobby? Above all, how can we boast of a free press, and therefore of a free country, given the power of people whose very last desire seems to be to clarify and distinterestedly to debate the issues vitally affecting the community as a whole?

The stealthy pillager so brilliantly embodied by Anthony Hopkins may seem to owe less to observation than to nightmare. But who knows? He might also be categorised as a salutory warning. The way things sometimes appear to be going, he could indeed be the next rough beast, its time come round at last, to slouch towards our Bethlehem to be born. □

MUSIC

Smaller & better

Andrew Clements

THE COMPACT DISC was launched in Britain a little over two years ago, with lavish publicity in the specialist record magazines and many ambitious claims about the format's innate superiority over the black vinyl LP, which henceforth would be entirely outmoded. CDs have now been around long enough for us to make some reasonably informed points about their prospects, and the signs are that, unlike some audio innovations (most notably quadraphony), they are here to stay. Old-fashioned records may not have been completely eclipsed, and at present the CD coverage of the repertory remains highly partial, but the position is improving every month and it really does look as if what we now have is a durable and high-quality new system of reproduction.

Controversy still rages in the more esoteric hi-fi journals over the true improvement that is offered by CD. The current view seems to be that, although the difference in sound quality between a CD and an LP played through the *best* turntable system available is negligible, perhaps to some ears even favouring the traditional set-up in terms of tonal evenness and textural clarity, for average domestic units using moderately priced components the CD offers a quantum improvement in fidelity. The lack of background noise — the virtual elimination of tape hiss and surface clicks and plops — is only one of the benefits; there is also a smoother, cleaner frequency response and a palpable increase in immediacy. Suddenly top-quality sound reproduction is available without the outlay of several thousand pounds, and without the fastidious setting up which most expensive turntables require; a CD player connects directly into the auxiliary input on any standard amplifier.

The hardware has dropped steadily in price since it first came on to the market. The first-generation players cost around £500; now one can buy a perfectly serviceable machine for under £200, and Sony has recently launched a portable analogous to its Walkman cassette players. The real problem remains the cost of the discs. Retailers seem unwilling at present to offer substantial discounts on the recommended prices as they do conventionally with LPs, so that the cheapest CDs from the major record companies are a fraction under £9. This month, though, the Pickwick label launches a new series of mid-price (£6.99) issues of analogue recordings from the 1970s, and the big labels might soon be persuaded into producing their older material more cheaply. Brand-new recordings are unlikely to come down in price, however, so the real financial difficulty in replacing an existing collection of LPs with CDs will remain. An opera set of, say, *Tristan*, costs about £50, more even than a top price ticket at Covent Garden. The pragmatic approach would seem to be to continue to use the two systems in parallel, especially as some of the more arcane and interesting repertory is still issued only on LP, and is unlikely to appear on CD in the forseeable future.

YET THE COMPACT-DISC catalogue is already more interesting than that might suggest, for smaller European and transatlantic companies have been a good deal more enterprising in their releases than the familiar multinationals. With the exception of Deutsche Grammophon and Philips (which invented CD anyway) the household names are still circumspect in their policy, with CD releases following a decent interval after their LP counterparts, when the likely market has been assessed. Simultaneous issues from EMI or CBS are very much the exception rather than the rule. The result gives the catalogue a lop-sided look: while it's possible to choose from no less than five CD versions of Schubert's 'Death and the Maiden' quartet, one would be hard pressed to assemble a complete cycle of the Schubert symphonies, and for all the Mahler symphonies which have been released

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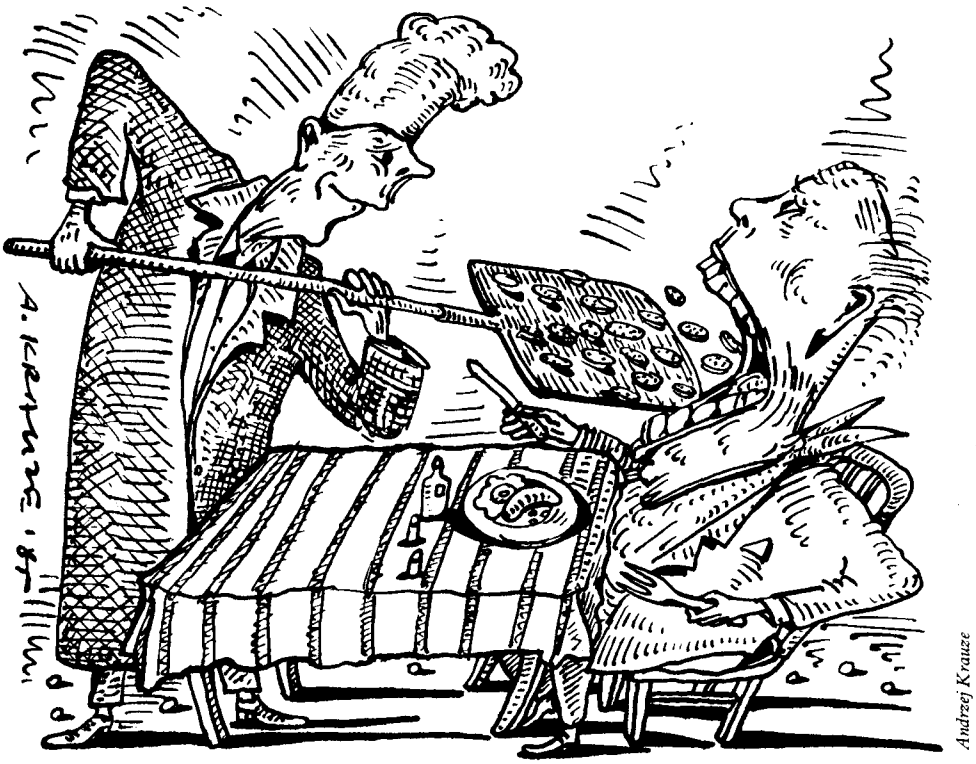
(including two sets of the Seventh, least performed and recorded of the canon) I'm not sure there is even a single version of every Bruckner symphony. We have got past the stage of having only Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and Tchaikovsky's *1812* Overture endlessly duplicated, but the pressures of populism still bulk large in big company CD thinking.

Two trends are more heartening. One is the apparent willingness of continental labels such as Orfeo and Eurodisc to make available recordings of concert performances. A stunning account of Beethoven's Fourth Symphony with Carlos Kleiber and the Bavarian State Symphony Orchestra is a remarkably faithful reproduction of the intensity which this conductor can generate in the concert hall, while the series of recitals which Sviatoslav Richter gave in Tokyo includes performances of Schubert sonatas which are unrivalled in their intensity.

Probably more significant for the long-term breadth of the repertory is the decision of the major labels to transfer archive material to CD. When first launched the concentration was understandably on recent digitally recorded programmes, in which the quality of the sound was most obvious. Those date only from the last five years or so, and very soon it became impossible to increase the range of issues rapidly enough without falling back on older material. While the sound is not quite as vivid as it is on the most up-to-date recordings — and however carefully the CD transfer is made there is still a residue of tape noise — the results generally have been quite remarkable. EMI in particular has extended its catalogue by transferring even some pre-LP performances, especially by Fürtwängler.

Elsewhere there does seem to have been a genuine effort to close obvious holes in the coverage by the use of the back catalogue, and to respond to rival ventures. In answer to EMI's fine *War Requiem* under Simon Rattle which appeared on CD last year, Decca has resuscitated Britten's own recording from the early 1960s. For a while Eurodisc's Ring cycle under Janowski had the Wagner CD market to itself; now Philips' Bayreuth recordings (under Böhm), Decca's epoch-making cycle with Solti and, most recently, Karajan's Deutsche Grammophon sequence have all appeared. Solti's recordings in particular have come up marvellously well.

So far there have been very few CD-only releases. Deutsche Grammophon has put together compilations at medium price which are not available otherwise; apart from those, only one significant issue is confined to CD. That is the version of Mahler's Ninth Symphony taken from live performances by the Berlin Philharmonic under Karajan, a combination which produced a highly significant LP of the same work only a few years ago. Yet the immediacy and naturalness of the new version are quite remarkable, and justify the use of the compact disc better than anything else I know. It might seem ironic that it should take a concert-hall recording, without the opportunity for substantial editing, to show the medium at its best; but the main gains for the majority of listeners will be in presence and involvement, precisely the qualities which a live performance carries most potently. □



Andrzej Krauze

The cult of the oatcake

David Montrose

SCOUSE, laver bread, parkin, chudleighs, brown betty... Britain's regional delicacies would provide material for a shelfload of cookbooks. The Potteries contributes two main floats to this gastronomic parade: lobby and oatcakes. Lobby, a stew made from root vegetables and a low-budget cut of beef, is a thicker version of the cawl, pronounced 'cowl', found in South Wales, only without the chopped leeks. (Potters, of course, insist that cawl is a thinner version of lobby, only with chopped leeks.) Oatcakes — not to be confused with their crisp Scottish counterparts — are thin pancakes about the size of 45 rpm records made from a mixture of fine oatmeal, white flour, salt, sugar, yeast, milk and water, cooked on an iron plate, known as a bakestone, heated from beneath. Oatcakes have been around a long time — longer, in fact, than the Potteries itself — dating from at least the early 18th century. They were giants in those days: thicker, twice the present diameter, the means by which North Staffordshire's rural poor filled their bellies cheaply. With the Industrial Revolution, though, and the emergence of the Potteries, oatcakes moved into the town and, on a small scale, started to be produced commercially. At some point, too, they changed from being a mere food, like lobby, into an expression of local identity as well. During nearly four years' residence in the district, I have yet to meet a native who will admit to disliking them.

To devout Potters, eating oatcakes is not simply a question of biting, chewing and swallowing. Not at all: a ritual is involved. Like any self-respecting faith, that of the oatcake has its special days of observance. These derive from an historical curiosity. For some reason, local bakers never took up commercial oatcake production: it began, and for some while continued, as a cottage industry. In time, this developed into a network of independent shops, usually family businesses, which made and sold nothing but oatcakes: a network which, though smaller since the war, still exists. (Mind you, the married couple reputed to be the finest contemporary oatcake-makers operate, traditionally, from a terraced house just outside Hanley. Customers queue in the street and are served through the parlour window.) Oatcake shops are invariably tiny, invariably found where rents are lower, away from the town centres. And, perhaps most importantly, they only open — as, mysteriously, they have always done — during a certain part of the week: Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sunday mornings. As oatcakes must be bought and consumed on the same day — unless, of course, you *like* them stale — this practice has long established a calendar of indulgence and denial. In recent years, admittedly, supermarkets and delicatessens in the Potteries have perpetrated the heresy of selling oatcakes throughout the week. True believers, though, do not patronise such haunts of nonconformity. ▷

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Eating oatcakes on the correct days meets but one of the ritual's requirements. They must also be eaten in conjunction with the proper meal and in the proper fashion. Here again, heretical forces have been attempting to undermine the old ways. There is, for example, a recipe book* containing such dubious novelties as 'deviled fish oatcakes' and 'oatcakes chop suey'. The faithful partake of less exotic fare. If eaten for lunch — on Thursdays, Fridays or (in particular) Saturdays — oatcakes are accompanied by sausage, cheese and tinned tomatoes which have been grilled on (preferably) an enamel plate. The following procedure then applies. The plate is transferred to the table and as much as possible of its contents arranged in a line across the width of an oatcake. The oatcake is now rolled into a tight cylinder, an end of which is dipped into the juices remaining on the plate. At this point, the first bite can be undertaken. The dipping manoeuvre is repeated with each subsequent bite. Care must be exercised at all times, since juice from the filling does exhibit a tendency to leak through the oatcake and run down the wrist of the consumer, with consequent danger to cuffs and sleeves. As a sweet course, the really orthodox favour pikelets — a thicker oatcake studded with currants — but this is optional.

When oatcakes are eaten for breakfast, the same ritual is enacted, except that, on the plate, sausage is replaced by bacon. Oatcake breakfasts are customarily Sunday events, which indicates the kind of sacrifice that committed Potters are willing to endure. At least one of the family has, after all, to forego his or her lie-in with the newspapers to make a pre-breakfast pilgrimage to the chosen shop.

Oatcakes, incidentally, may be eaten cold or warm. Needless to say, there is a prescribed method of reheating: they are wrapped in a damp teacloth and placed in a medium oven. This enables the desired warmth to be obtained while avoiding undesired dryness.

Clearly, it is the oatcake's individuality — the special shops and etiquette that set it apart — which has made it a matter of local pride as well as a subject worthy of the quasi-sociological interest manifested by this article. And, no doubt, that pride has been reinforced by the fact that, unlike many other regional delicacies, the oatcake has remained truly regional, to the extent that the entry under that name in my *Oxford Concise* refers solely to the Scottish variety. The explanation for this localisation is obvious, even though Potters understandably pretend otherwise. As a transplanted Londoner, though, I can reveal the truth: oatcakes taste like slightly moist face-flannels. □

*Staffordshire Oatcake Recipe Book, *J.H. Brookes (Printers) Ltd., 141-149 Bryan Street, Hanley. 75p.*

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Naseem Khan

Tell-tale

IT WAS A wild night in Cromer. Gales howled through the narrow streets. In the darkness out there somewhere a sea boomed angrily. No one was about in the Norfolk town and, frankly, who could blame them? As Work in Progress struggled through the night-time streets, the quest began to seem more and more daft. Was this the sort of night in which to go looking for story-tellers? Would the Story-Telling Tour really stop at Cromer? Or was it all, if you'll pardon the phrase, a tall story?

Now, on the face of it, there was nothing intrinsically absurd in the search. Story-telling has been experiencing a quiet revival over the past five years and, schools apart, is beginning to make an appearance at a range of events. The vast American Festival has come over with its story-teller. London's Commonwealth Institute has traditional British story-tellers side by side with shamans and spirit mediums in the 3rd Festival of Ancestral Voices in early June.

But, not surprisingly, the bedrock for the revival has been schools (ILEA pioneered the movement in appointing Robert Lagnado to tell stories in London schools a good while back). And the impetus, says Ben Haggarty of the Story-Telling Unit, has been multiracialism. An apparently easy step into multiculturalism, stories carry the added bonus of a rich variety of new myths and folk-tales.

There is an engaging quality about the idea of reviving story-telling, like a return to an Eden-like age of innocence or a pre-industrial haven. But, as with any idea that seems simple, reality proves rather different, the practice and discipline of story-telling more difficult than they seem.

Who tells stories any longer, for a start, and what? When Battersea Arts Centre held their Story-Telling Festival early this year, they included sessions for local grandparents to tell stories. In a hugely successful event, with audiences of over 200, these sessions were the only ones that flopped. The art of family story-telling has gone leaving hardly a trace, killed off by television.

But, for all that, what Battersea proved is that there is a sizeable adult audience prepared to turn out to listen to stories. The Norfolk tour didn't strike quite such a vein (hardly surprising since the group was playing a succession of one-night stands in venues that ranged from pubs to parish halls). But even in Cromer — blizzard-swept, cold Cromer — there were people who'd battled with the gales to get to the sober gothic parish hall. Ben Haggarty and Pomme Clayton were in full swing when I eventually wrenched open the heavy door and tumbled into the darkness.

The atmosphere inside was rather eerie. Four of them (Norfolk story-teller Hugh Lupton and musician Graham Shimell as well as Haggarty and Clayton) were seated like pashas under a vaguely oriental canopy. The only light came from candles and paraffin lamps. The story being told by Haggarty was one of those archetypal ones about a wastrel who enters into a contract with the devil. The story had come, said Haggarty, from Duncan Williamson, a Scottish tinker who claimed to have 3,000 stories in his head.

And what a story this one was — not a simple one of outwitting but a playful one that unravelled itself mischievously in Haggarty's quietly skilful telling. Outside the storm clattered. Inside the audience strained intently to find out what would happen next. Would Jack be able to get rid of the ill-omened purse? What part would the tiny Bible play in the denouement and what on earth would Jack do with the thousands and thousands of converted imps?

When Haggarty ended his tale and the group paused (hot fruit punch for all), there was a slight sigh. Look round the audience and you could have seen an oddly common expression on their faces: a kind of bemused and slightly dreamy look.

Pomme Clayton — small, dark and female — woke them up with a Japanese story of possession by demons, followed later by a Chaucerian tale of outrageous cuckoldry. Hugh Lupton chose another ghostly story, a far more romantic tale then the others, about doomed lovers: less satisfying because it gave little scope to human resourcefulness. And dying of a broken heart is, let's face it, a bit wet.

AT THE END of the day though, what does the story movement add up to? A curiosity? Or more? The last twitch of a dead creature, or new life? The case with schoolchildren, where so much of the work has been done, would seem proven.

Haggarty listed a range of unquestionable benefits — the ability to listen creatively, the development of articulacy and self-confidence, the imaginative sharing in one another's culture. It goes without saying that all of these are as valuable to adults as to children.

However the Story-Telling Unit want to achieve more than this. The core of their work is the way in which they see the role of the story-teller — not performer but mouthpiece, the next stage in the handing-down of a long oral tradition.

Actors, said Haggarty decisively, make terrible story-tellers — they put on a voice, they assume characters. Although each story-teller gives the story a patina particularly his or her own, they do not dominate the story.

Inevitably, the Story-Telling Unit will tell only traditional tales. The old ones have acquired a depth and accumulation of meaning with long telling, they feel, that the new tales can't offer. Structurally they have acquired economy and effectiveness.

A purist aim — nothing more nor less than the revival of a bardic tradition — it is not an easy one.

What Cromer showed, however, is that, at its most basic, a good story still draws its listeners. Television does not quite rule. □

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TELEVISION

Hugo Williams

Diorama

THE PRINCESS OF WALES was seen last week touring the war cemetery at Anzio wearing a come-hither smile and strawberry cocktail dress with floppy bow. Everyone does their best to imagine her in the nude but, on this occasion, judging from her blushes, they had succeeded. 'Pretty hats and uniforms were at Anzio to commemorate the Allied landings,' Kate Adie reminded us in **Italy Welcomes the Princess** (BBC-1), as the Princess caught our eye one last time. 'I was just 18 years old,' said a veteran close to tears at the sight of the Royals on their walkabout. 'We haven't forgotten the blokes, boys really . . .' His voice trailed off. As Kate Adie complained, 'The Italian crowd were disconcertingly talking and chatting all the time' — munching their crisps and waiting for the heroine to swoon or something.

The Vatican sequence was like the first day at school. 'The Princess had confessed herself apprehensive,' said court reporter Anthony Carthew on the less sexist **The Prince and Princess of Wales in Italy** (ITV). She was making no secret of the fact as we watched what looked like a first run-through of the scene. As it turned out, her fears were well-founded: the Pope's magnificent floor-length white watered silk robes with side panels featuring a single row of silk-covered buttons running down the front easily outshone her own mock nun's habit with detachable touring veil. It didn't help that the Italian bit parts hadn't learnt their lines. 'The prelate in charge of protocol removed her title at a stroke,' said Carthew, 'by introducing her to the Pope as Lady Diana.' I thought he said 'Lady Di' myself, but he might as well have pinched her cheek and asked for a date for all the omniscience he was achieving. Diana didn't seem to mind the reference to her maiden state and giggled behind the Pope's back as her husband introduced the cameramen to His Holiness, hoping he would call one of them Humpty Dumpty.

It was time to go into the Pope's study for the presents. 'We thought you might like this,' said Charles, handing the Pope a book. The Pope didn't take the book, but indicated a mosaic he had bought for Charles, which Charles thought was 'very generous' of him. The Pope then gave them both their medals. 'The Princess characteristically couldn't resist opening hers immediately,' said Carthew bitchily. But at least she resisted putting it on. This should have been the highspot of the tour, but the Pope didn't seem to want to spare the couple any of the Church's characteristic lifelessness and there was 'a clear sense of relief' (Adie) and 'an obvious lightening of the atmosphere' (Carthew) when they came out of his study, as if they had got away with a warning this time.

There followed the improvised section of the show. No one seemed to be talking to the Pope, so the Prince made his way over. 'Do you ever listen to the BBC?' he asked. 'Very, very, very little,' replied His Holiness, which was clearly a vatican euphemism for 'absolutely never' and a signal that the audience was over.

The dominant image of the tour was of tiny royal people (mostly of the Church) coming through immense double doors that normally remain closed, wearing strangely well co-ordinated colours. In Florence, for example, Diana had picked out a magenta cocktail dress to match the jumbo magenta cummerbunds worn by her flanking cardinals. It gave them all something to giggle about as they faced the photographers once more. 'So much to see, so little time,' sighed the Princess under her lashes as a bunch of novices jostled to touch her. It was a natural response to a visit 'with just a hint of the package tour about it' (Adie).

Meanwhile, over on Channel Four, **Twenty-Twenty Vision** were presenting a third in their devastating series of films on *Divided Britain: Future Fall-out*, in which we witnessed the social cleavage of the miners' strike widening to take in the classroom. First, a well shorn and shod headmaster held forth on the traditional virtues of his school, its emphasis on discipline and achievement for the sake of the children's future: 'We don't like cult haircuts because they encourage cult behaviour' — after which we were astonished to learn that the model establishment he was talking about was down the road from the Markham Colliery in Doncaster, last pit to go back to work after the strike and that his school had been riven by sympathetic strikes and had rioted on the day of the miners' march back to work.

Where had he picked up his expertise on street credibility? we wondered. A highly articulate black girl explained: 'We don't have this short-back-and-sides approach to school any more. That's all over now. We're fed up with the fantasy that everyone's going to get a job when they leave school. We know in advance who's going on the scrap-heap and who is factory-fodder.' 'You don't need O-levels to count biscuits,' said another girl, 'but if you haven't got them they think you don't want to work. People with jobs look down on you and call you a dosser.' An enlightened teacher laid it on the line. 'Children find the sort of skills we're offering them totally irrelevant to a life of unemployment. The aggression could easily overflow. They are not unintelligent . . .'

Punkdom, skinhood and crime offer the only alternatives to long-term depression. In groups they turn and face facts with grinning nihilism. The programme closed with slowed-down film of Mohicans performing their mock battle-dances, running and jumping delightedly into a fray of pogoing punks. It wasn't difficult to imagine them as shock troops in the coming clash. One saw them with red caps or knitting needles, a triangular blade rattling down on a certain elegant neck once frilled with lace. □

Among this week's contributors:

FRANCIS WHEEN's books include *Television* (Century, 1985) and *The Battle for London* (Pluto, 1985).

JOAN SMITH's book about atomic bomb tests and their effects will be published by Faber later this year.

BOB WOFFINDEN is working on a book about miscarriages of justice.

Weekend competition

No 2872 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Never mind 'Able was I ere I saw Elba'. We'd like some palindromic sentences with a more *contemporary* ring. Max. five attempts per entrant. Deadline 22 May.

No 2869 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Cautionary Tales aimed not, for once, at the young but at the imprudent mature.

Report **By Rosie Hughes**

There, my treasures, you've done yourselves proud. Of course, there couldn't be a poem in the world as fine as Mr Belloc's own 'Matilda', but given the meanness of the line allocation you've penned some most tremblesome Warnings. Eleven pounds each to the authors printed below.

A Bishop should Believe in God
And Praise His Name, and Fear His Rod,
But *David* was Consumed with Doubt
And shared his Notions round about
And Questioned the Apostles' Creed,
And God was Very Cross Indeed.
'Well, since you don't believe in me,
I'll give you Durham for your See,'
Said God, and so He did, I fear.
The Moral is extremely clear.
If you'd succeed, my little Elf,
Keep your Opinions to yourself.

GERARD BENSON

Richard wore an old school tie
And ran a mag called *Private Eye*
Which published things both false and true
About the Rich and Famous, who,
Lacking Richard's sense of fun,
Sometimes sued him (sometimes won).
Then, one day, another journal
Dug up something quite infernal
From our Richard's misspent youth
(Which may or mayn't have been the truth).
Richard sued and came a cropper,
Denting thus his *amour propre*.

RON RUBIN

The chief defect of Heseltine
Was manifest when, barely nine,
He dressed up as a Christmas tree
And kicked the dog lest it should pee
Upon his trunk. With bulging eyes
He quested after fresh disguise:
As statesman garbed in sober black;
As bombardier in jacket (flak).
His mania increasing, he
Encased himself in TNT
And, pulling down his nose-cone hat,
Commanded, 'Fire!' And that was that.

ALISON PRINCE

Jimmy Reid
Who wanted to be a second Orwell but wasn't
Come listen one and all, and heed
The Tragic Fate of Jimmy Reid,
Who, having clearly failed to move
The Working Class, set out to prove
(Though in a manner somewhat *gauche*)
Himself a Democratic Soc-
Ialist. He grew a thick moustache,
And, unsolicited, gave harsh
Advice to strikers, in *The Times*.
Alas! for all his paradigms,
The truth — for ev'ry word he wrote — is
No one took the slightest notice.

A. R. FRITH

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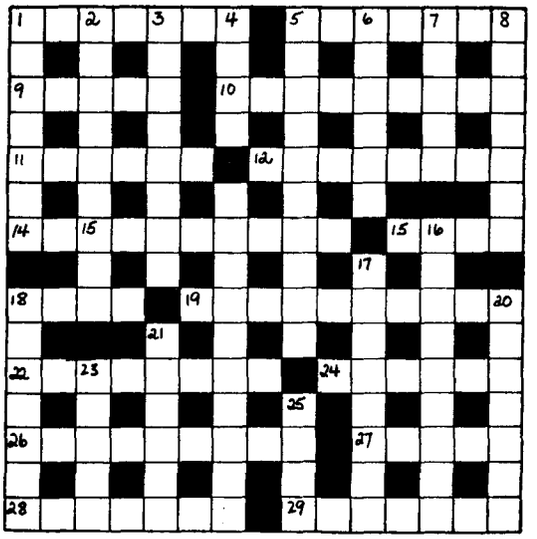
Weekend Crossword 1478

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1478, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 21 May.



Name_____

Address_____

ACROSS

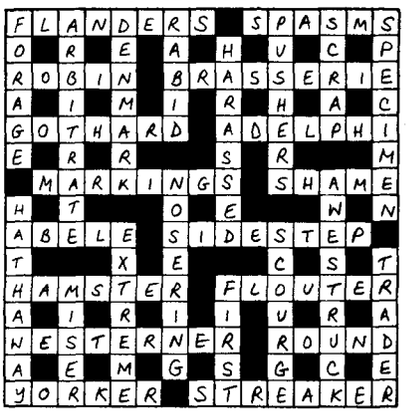
1. Strange horse without a carriage (7)
5. Initial word (7)
9. The wall translated into an animal (5)
10. A skilled person could make one craftier (9)
11. It takes a fearsome creature to become tedious (6)
12. The press ensures that one is finished in prison (8)
14. You enter race in place of justice (10)
15. Ruler who sees that waste is reduced (4)
18. Home is out of tune (4)
19. Congratulate one when fortune is about to draw out (10)
22. Water creature softly comes in to land (8)
24. Calls from the bush outside the window (6)
26. A pig, ducks, and ham processed for eating raw (9)
27. Relative sound of French city (5)
28. Entertainment in which a weird person is about to look back (7)
29. An unruly adolescent without a show of independence attended class (7)

DOWN

1. Of sweet music making me turn cold about one (7)
2. Flower which appears, yearly, we hear, beside the holiday place (9)
3. Place where drinks are put in front of the drinker (8)
4. Cunning hunter who got stuck into the sausages (4)
5. Push hot air into circulation by writing (10)
6. Plundered right before I escaped (6)
7. Nape (5)
8. Drink up with a girl like a fish (7)
13. Withholding information to make a fellow try to communicate (8,2)
16. Full of gas, it sounds like the apartment you let someone use (9)
17. Drawn off when a man is about to ring (8)
18. Part of horse left cut up beside a river (7)
20. Part of London in which a journalist carries a weapon (4,3)
21. There is nothing in the water to give one a ludicrous descent (6)
23. Cecil has lost the south island (5)
25. An emperor was born during this festivity (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1476



Prizewinners to 1476
J. Buxton, Chesterfield
Moira Deveson, London SE5
A. Gaster, Llanidloes, Powys

The solution and prizewinners to 1477 will appear next week.

★ Classified Ads ★ Phone 01-251 5487 ★

HEARTSEARCH

ACADEMIC MALE, divorced, attractive, youthful 45, wide interests, tolerant but non-smoker; country-walker, wine-drinker, seeks relaxed, cheerful female sharing possibilities and developments. Box (19)0789.

AFFECTIONATE MALE, 35, graduate, bearded, spectacled, single, slim, non-smoker, interested classical music, literature, art, countryside, current affairs, seeks intelligent London female for loving, long-term relationship. Box (17)0724.

ALONE! LOVABLE, caring, professional man, London/Surrey, seeks girlfriend, age 25-32, to share life and memories. I am Indian, but you do not have to be. Box (19)0797.

ARE YOU a lively minded individual, 18-80, enjoying the arts, discussions, conferences, rambles, dancing? The Progressive League caters for Mind, Body and intellectual Stimulus. And it's so cheap. Ring 01-452 8358.

ATTRACTIVE MALE, young 48, tall, slim, no ties, solvent, house Sussex coast, seeks younger, slim, sensuous female, for friendship & whatever ensues. Box (19)0803.

BIRMINGHAM MAN, 31, Labour socialist, lecturer, presentable Aquarian; currently lacking direction and misses female company. Seeks interesting woman for evenings together and perhaps more. Box (18)0740.

COLLEGE LECTURER (fit, non-smoker), seeks fortyish, socialist feminist woman (North East London), for drinks, cinema, theatre visits. A sense of humour would be appreciated. Box (19)0795.

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating, Dept. (7NS), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-938 1011.

ESN TEACHER, 45, ex-husband, ex-father, gentle, presentable, educated, well-mannered, enjoys music, books, countryside. Seeks single/sep./div. woman with child(ren). Any race, anywhere UK. Box (19)0806.

GLASGOW-BASED, non-serious academic, mid-40s, 5ft 10ins, fairly presentable, varied interests, wishes to meet attractive woman, 30-42, with a sense of humour. Box (19)0801.

FAIRLY ATTRACTIVE lady in her mid-thirities, living in Oxford, anti-Thatcher politics, animal lover, would like to meet genuine male, to share good and bad times with. Box (19)0790.

FEMALE GRADUATE, 31, (London), fairly attractive, seeks caring, educated, unmaterialistic, country-loving, thinking, feeling, communicating, socialist man, with many interests, casual not smart. Photo? Box (17)0695.

GLASGOW FEMALE, mid-twenties, small, dark, attractive graduate, who hates discos and crowded pubs, seeks intelligent, humorous male, approx. 25-35. Box (19)0800.

HEARTSEARCHERS UNITE! Form associations. I'll start 'Northern 45 Upwards Group'. Discussion weekend my place. Balanced numbers both sexes. Bring food. Group travel arranged. Box (18)0766.

HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL professional man, Cambridge graduate, personable, fifties, tied, very wide cultural interests, left-wing politics, avid reader especially of history and philosophy, but also enjoys the lighter side of life including good food and wine, seeks discreet but warm and caring relationship with lady, 30-50, of similar interests, perhaps also tied, and perhaps with own place in Central London. Box (19)0804.

LIVELY-MINDED woman, 20s-40s, sought for friendship, platonic or amative, by struggling author, 34, genuinely & uncomplicatedly open-married. Non-sexist. N. Midlands. Wonderful bargain! Write now! Box (19)0792.

PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, 49, interesting career, needing extend social life, varied interests, wishes to meet unattached, personable man, 45-55. Box (16)0676.

ROLE-REVERSAL? Male, 33, enjoys housework, seeks career-minded woman, interested in acquiring a 'male au pair' or 'househusband'. Box (18)0742.

MANCHESTER AREA, solvent, single male, 29, 5' 11", slim, fair, graduate, professional, catholic tastes, well-travelled. Interested arts, music, walking, seeks similar female, 24-30, with attractive personality. Strictest confidence., a.l.a. Box (19)0788.

'MR WALKER' AVAILABLE; travelled, solvent, urbane but not smooth, friendly (Quaker), sincere, discreet and mature (retired lawyer), non-smoker, driver, located London. Box (19)0793.

ORIENTAL FEMALE as friend and partner sought by secure academic, 39. Interests: art, music, cycling, nature, cooking, films, books, swimming and friendly wrestling. Box (19)0791.

REDUNDANT OXBRIDGE man, late fifties, fit & active, seeks caring, living relationship, with younger woman – medic or similar professional? North West preferred. Prompt response. Box (19)0796.

SINCERE, TALLISH, graduate male, 29, would like to meet intelligent, sun-loving, naturist lady, for romance and the great outdoors, London or North. Photo appreciated. Box (19)0794.

SLIM, ATTRACTIVE, gentle, unprejudiced, Aquarian, motorcycling physicist, 26, would love to meet woman for balanced, caring, honest friendship and mutual growth. South Oxon(ish) A.L.A. Box (19)0813.

SLIM, PASSIONATE, intelligent lady, 40s, needs loving, professional gentleman, 40-55. Predilection American accents but attraction has no specifications. Peace and quiet, dining, travel hoped for. Box (19)0799.

YORKSHIRE-BASED academic, 37, in emotionally and intellectually unfulfilling relationship, interested in art, music, good food, literature, politics, seeks female for genuine friendship. Hoping that together we can share and grow. Box (19)0798.

PURSUITS

AMUSING, INTELLIGENT, idealistic, single male, youthful 40, loves travel, countryside, arts, spontaneity, cheerfulness, seeks attractive, educated lady, 20s-30s, to share pursuits. Box (18)0764.

INTERESTING LOW/Middlebrow London woman, attractive, large build, retiring shortly, seeks unattached, caring man, 59+, wide interests, for lasting companionship. Possible accommodation available. Box (19)0805.

GROUPS

APPLEGAY, EUROPE'S largest association of intelligent gay men seeking friends/partners. For details write: Applegay, 51b Bavaria Road, London N19 4EU.

PERSONAL

OLD FRIENDS: an introduction agency for the over fifties. Loneliness is not inevitable. Details from: Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, London N5 2DB.

OPEN MINDED? Open Secrets.

POSITION WANTED in Women's Co-op (London), by intelligent lady. Tel. 0603 486363.

WORKSHOPS

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOPS in Psychodrama training. Conducted by Zerka Moreno partner of founder J. L. Moreno. Two separate 5 day workshops: 14-19 July and 22-26 July. Participants may attend one or both. Also: one week residential courses in Psychodrama run by Marcia Karp on: 12-18 May, 2-8 June, 16-22 June and 11-17 August. Monthly: Psychodrama week-ends in London: 25-26 May and 21-22 September. Held at The Centre, 12 Adelaide Street, off Trafalgar Square. 10-5 p.m. £30. Contact: Holwell Centre for Psychodrama, East Down, Barnstaple, Devon. 027 182 267.

HEARTSEARCH/PURSUITS
Rates — £5.75 for 25 words and Box number.
Extra words **35p each.**
All the quoted rates include VAT.
Lineage Ads **must** be **pre-paid.**

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ENVIRONMENTALLY AWARE? Got a driving license? PAPER BACK LIMITED – the co-operative supplying recycled paper seeks 3rd worker experienced in some of: Marketing, Sales, Campaigning, Customer Liaison, Art and Design. An exciting and challenging job for a person with a commitment to co-operative working. Phone 01-729 1382 for details. CV & covering letter to PAPER BACK by 21 May.

OV SELECTION have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers. Phone Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy), Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

The National Youth Theatre requires a

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Good typing and shorthand required, *good spelling essential.*

An interesting and rewarding job for anyone interested in young people and the theatre. Salary negotiable.

Typed applications with full CV to: **Director, NYTGB, 34 York Way, London N1**

society
of civil & public servants

TRADE UNION RESEARCH OFFICER

The Society of Civil and Public Servants, which represents over 85,000 members in the Civil Service and other public bodies invites applications for a *temporary appointment* as part-time Research Officer (2½ days per week), to cover maternity leave.

The post will involve preparation of policy and advisory papers for senior officers and general support for national negotiations. The post holder will be expected to take primary responsibility for work in the area of equal opportunities for women members and to contribute to the work of the Research Department in other areas as required.

Candidates should be capable of a high standard of drafting work and preparing policy papers under pressure. An ability to handle statistical information would also be an advantage.

The post holder will be paid on an annual rate of £5,126 (i.e. half the full rate, inclusive of Inner London Weighting).

Applications should be sent to the Assistant General Secretary (Finance and Organisation), Society of Civil and Public Servants, 124/130 Southwark Street, London SE1 0TU enclosing full CV with details of education, employment history, trade union experience and other relevant information together with a day time telephone number. ***Closing date for applications is 20 May 1985.***

PROPERTY

WEST WALES: character residence & 4 acres. – £39,500 o.n.o. Upper reaches of beautiful Aeron Valley, house in attractive facing stone – 4 bedroom spacious accommodation, outbuildings – ideal as craft shop/workshop etc. 2 pasture paddocks, area of woodland bordered by a river. Send s.a.e. Re Ref. 2927. Evans Bros, Auctioneers, Tregaron, Dyfed SY25 6HU. Tel. (09744) 654.

BOOKS/ PUBLICATIONS

DR DZIKOWSKI. 'How to look after your Heart' £5.95. Probably the best ever of this kind. Free leaflets – 92 Harley Street, London W1.

GUILDHALL BOOKSHOP, York St, Twickenham. SW London's largest secondhand bookshop. Politics, sociology, psychology, theology, history, art, travel, literature, fiction, natural history. . . Personal callers only, Mon.-Sat. 10.00-5.30.

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ACCOMMODATION WANTED

BRAZILIAN/ENGLISH COUPLE, Soil Scientist and Nutritionist – into 3rd World Development. Recently married, no children, seek a home in London. Flat in a family house perhaps? Good references. Phone Chris or Val 0734 664896.

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THE TYPING POOL a women's co-operative. Professional low cost typing of articles, thesis, letters etc. from script or tape. Translation and typing of French, German, Spanish and Italian. Central London. Tel: 01-430 0381.

UNPUBLISHED? NEW Authors Advisory Service may help. Peter Coxson, Fairwinds, Hillbrow, Liss, Hants. 0730 892271 or 01-642 1001.

LISTINGS

FRI 10 MAY

LONDON NUS against Apartheid student picket 3.30pm-5.30pm outside South Africa House, Trafalgar Sq. 5.30pm-7.30pm Picket by City AA Grp. **Org. BCM Box City Anti Apartheid Grp., WC1N 3XX.**

SAT 11 MAY

LIVERPOOL NW Labour History Grp. Spring Conf. 10am-4.30pm Liverpool Unemployment Centre, Hardman St. **Details: 0204 73985.**

LONDON CND Ex-Services celebrate 'Mountbatten Day' to mark 6th Anniversary of his Strasbourg speech. 7.30pm Holborn Library, Theobalds Rd, WC1. Spkrs. Air Commodore Mackrie, DFC, CBE, Deaconess Olive Price, Dick Muskett, NUPE.

CARDIFF Ex-Services CND march leaves Victoria Park 2pm. Public Meeting at Temple of Peace 3pm.

LEEDS Ex-Services CND March & Rally. **Details: Jim Thorpe 0924 374778.**

EDINBURGH Ex Services CND March & Rally. **Details: John Ward 069 882 2865.**

LONDON Swiss Cottage Community Assoc. Anti-Racism Event 8pm-10.30pm 19 Winchester Rd, NW3. Anti-Racist Poets, Steel n' Skin, bar, disco, food, Adm. £2/£1.50 membs. & UB40. **01-586 5272.**

LONDON Tigray – War, Famine, Revolution. Day Conf. 10am-6pm Westminster Cathedral Hall, Ambroseden Ave, SW1. Spkrs. incl. Susan George, John Markakis, James Petras, TPLF. Adm. £2/£1 UB40. **Org. Tigray Solidarity Campaign, 12 Stansfield Rd, SW9.**

TUES 14 MAY

LONDON Inauguration of London Peace Pagoda 9.30am Battersea Park. **Details: CND 01-223 4149.**

CITY of LONDON Anti-Apartheid lunch-time picket of 4 merchant banks. 12-12.30pm Hambros, 41 Bushopsgate, EC2; 12.45-1.15pm Rothschilds, New Court, St. Swithin's La, EC4; 1.25-1.55pm Schroder Wagg, 120 Cheapside, EC2; 2pm-2.30pm Hill Samuel, 100 Wood St, EC2. **Details: End Loans to Southern Africa (ELTSA) 1 London Bridge St, SE1. 01-403 2266.**

SWANAGE CND Meeting 'Bread Not Bombs' 8pm URC, High St. **Details: (Alan Stewart) 42 422430.**

WED 15 MAY

BRIGHTON 'Belgrano Affair' by Tam Dalyell MP 7.30pm NALGO Club, Edward St. **Org. Brighton Labour Campaigner.**

LONDON 'Open Day' at City Centre Project – Information & Resource Centre for Office Workers, 10am onwards 32/35 Featherstone St. EC1. **Details: 01-608 1338.**

LONDON 'Rebuilding the Left – lessons of the miners' strike'. Spkrs. incl. Tony Benn, Kay Sutcliffe, Sharon Atkins. 7.30pm County Hall, Rm. 143, SE1. **Org. London Labour Briefing.**

THURS 16 MAY

LONDON 'Namibia and the struggle for peace' – SWAPO Medical Kits Appeal. Discn. & slides by Rev. John Wheeler/Collection. 7.30pm Jacksons La. Community Centre, Highgate, N7. **Org. City of London AA Grp.**

LLANDUDNO Labour Party Wales Rally & Social 7.30pm Canolfan Aberconwy Centre, Promenade. Spkrs. incl. Roy Hattersley MP. Adm. £1.

FRI 17 MAY

SUNDERLAND 'The Fuel Poverty Crisis' Conf. 10am-4pm Civic Centre. **Org. Sunderland Community Heating Advice & Insulation Project. Details: John McGowan, 7 Grange Cresc. Stockton Rd, SR2 7EN. 0783 655277.**

SAT 18 MAY

CARLISLE Green Fair – to promote caring attitude to environment 10am-4pm Market Hall, Fisher St. **Details: Pat Williams Wigton 43190.**

LONDON 'Beyond NATO' CND dayschool County Hall, SE1. Spkrs. incl. Bruce Kent, Jonathon Porritt. **Registration: £3/£1 UB40 to Linda Churnside, c/o 11 Goodwin St, N4 by 8th May.**

WAKEFIELD 'You can always have another one!' study day for women who have suffered miscarriages, Health Professionals interested in care and counselling, all those interested in this socially taboo subject. 10am-4pm Treacy Hall, adjacent Wakefield Cathedral. Spkrs. incl. Dr. Peter Huntingford (BBC 'Birthright' programme), Dr. Barbara Pickard PhD. **Tickets from Secretary, Miscarriage Assoc, c/o Dolphin Cottage, 4 Ashfield Terrace, Thorpe, Nr. Wakefield. Phone: Leeds 828946.**

LONDON Communist Congress Social 7pm City University, Northampton Sq., EC1. Vauxy Theatre & Colossus. Adm. £2.50/£1.50 delegates & UB40. Hot metal £2 per head.

FORTHCOMING

20 MAY LONDON 'Dread of the Spread' David Lowry on Britain's proliferating nuclear weapons. 7.30pm Torriano Meeting Hs., 99 *Toriano* Ave, NW5. **Org. Camden CND.**

20-26 MAY BREAD NOT BOMBS week of action. **Details: Campaign against Arms Trade, 5 Caledonian Rd, N1. 01-278 1976.**

21 MAY LONDON 'What is Britain going to say at end of Decade for Women conf. in Nairobi'. Spkrs. Jo Richardson MP, Georgina Ashworth of CHANGE. 6pm Cttee. rm. 10, House of Commons, SW1. **Details: CHANGE, 29 Gt. James St, WC1. 01-405 3601.**

21 MAY LONDON Campaign Against Racist Laws Lobby of Parliament. **Details: Dave Cook, 56 Edithna St, SW9 01-733 8508.**

22 MAY ISLINGTON 'Our Welfare Benefits & the Future' by Ruth Lister, Director, CPAG. 8pm Rm. 4 Town Hall, Upper St, N1. **Org. Islington Fabian Society, 28b Mildmay Rd, N1. 01-249 3679.**

22 MAY LONDON Islington drugs crisis meeting org. by IS&F Labour Party Womens Section/City Roads Project. 8pm The Florence, Florence St, N1. All women welcome.

23 MAY LONDON Wandsworth Assoc. for Mental Health meeting to set up 'drop in centre' for ex-mental hospital patients. 7.30pm Minstead Hall, Danebury Ave, SW17. **Details: WAMH, 3 Broderick Rd, SW17. 01-672 5108.**

24 MAY International Women's Day for Disarmament. **Details: END Fiona Weir 01-587 1563.**

25 MAY CAMDEN 'Homes for All Now!' – gathering for all fighting our appalling housing situation. 2pm 4 Carol St, NW1. **Orgs. Islington Housing Action Grp., 287 Upper St, N1, Haringay Homes for All, 32 Alexandra Rd, N8, Camden Squatters Assoc, 4 Carol St, NW1.**

29 MAY ALCONBURY to MOLESWORTH E. & S. *Midlands regional* day of action to defend Molesworth. March from Alconbury to 'gate party' at main contractors' gate. **Details: Nottingham Defend Molesworth Grp, CND, Unit B, 14-18 St. Mary's Gate, Lace Market, Nottingham. 0602 581948.**

29 MAY BRISTOL 'Deterring the Drinking Driver' Policy Forum Hawthorns Hotel. Spkrs. incl. Prof. Laurence Ross, Uni. of New Mexico, Chief Constable Roger Birch, Sussex Police. **Details: Action on Alcohol Abuse, 26 Craven St, London, WC2. 01-839 7344/5.**

1 JUNE GLASGOW 'Youth vs Trident' Demo. Assemble 12 noon George Sq. March off 12.30pm to encircle MoD building. Rally/Exhibition Kelvin Hall. **Details: Scottish Youth CND, 420 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow. 041-331 2878.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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will be published in New Statesman
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To advertise **Poetry Events** in **Billboard** contact: **Laura Berryman 01-251 5487**

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MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 12 May 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting. 'The Path to the Masters'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

Professor Ralf Dahrendorf, former Director of the London School of Economics, is delivering the *37th Series of Hamlyn Lectures*, on **'Law and Order'**, on 13 and 20 May and 3 and 10 June 1985 at **The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Charles Clore House, 17 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DR,** at **5.15 p.m.**
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FINANCIAL

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NAPLES, CAPRI, POMPEII, SORRENTO £135 21-29 Sept., 21-29 Dec.
ALBANIA 30 Sept/12 Oct. £220
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PEKING (7 days) MOSCOW (3 days) £780 out by plane, back by trans-Siberian 2-22 Nov. Full board and programme, 1st class hotels.

THE HIGH TATRAS. 16-26 July £150.

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